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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURU STAIRA MILENTA 1913-21

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The number of internees was about halved. What might have been a magnanimous gesture of goodwill was turned into a pitiable and shameful act of discrimination and pettiness, as future events in Frongoch demonstrated. Public opinion - Irish opinion - we learned, had become vociferous of late in demanding the release of the prisoners, had possibly forced the hands of the British Government to the point of releasing some of the internees. The British Government met the demand half way, but was not prepared to close the chapter entirely. Hence "for public safety" reasons Frongoch Internment Camp remained in existence for quite a large number of Irish prisoners.

Politically and nationally the Irish people had suddenly changed. On returning home one became aware of a new political atmosphere. What a change indeed! The tide had turned in favour of us, in favour of our cause. It was particularly in evidence when we arrived in Westland Row. It looked as if the whole population of Dublin had come to welcome us home. How heartening, if indeed embarrassing, to find ourselves treated overpowered with greetings, to feel ourselves treated not as vanquished but heroes and victors..! This had happened and was happening at every landing place, port or railway station on the return home or expected return home of "the poor prisoners". Such it was. Pearse was right - his prophecy had come true, even in the space of a few months. Many people who had hated us, had come to admire us, to lionise us. Was it not hard to understand the Irish temperament? The people too had learned to sing our songs - songs of praise "for the gallant men of Easter Week" and "the Felons of Our Land". Our songs, their songs, Ireland's songs. It was truly inapplicable and hardly understandable this strange spontaneous swing over to our side. But there it was, true

and unashamed, and undoubtedly Irish. This sudden conversion engendered in us a feeling that all was not lost after all. True, many of our best men, our gallant irreplaceable leaders were dead, many were undergoing severe trials and hardships in English convict jails, hundreds of good Volunteers, officers and men, were still interned, and, judging by all accounts, likely to remain for some time longer, but there was satisfaction in the thought that a "new spirit" had come into Ireland, a new spirit with great potentialities, hope and promise.

But all was not happiness or tending to happiness for the released prisoners, many of whom came home to endure other hardships, such as the loss of their former employment, of domestic trouble and distress. We, those of us who were thrown out of employment, were the victims of imperialism, victims of commercial jingoism and anti-nationalism. There we were thrown out of the frying pan into the fire. Quite a large number of men were so sadly circumstanced. What could be done about it? Undoubtedly, efforts had been made, and were being made, to relieve distress among our dependants, but the assistance given only touched the fringe, leaving a void between succour and support. Due to the absence of enough money to meet such a situation the Dependents Fund, which had been set up after the fighting in Easter Week, was incapable and unable to make ample provision to tide our men and their dependants over the difficulties then pressing heavily on them. Credit, however, was given by the men for what had been done, was being done in their behalf. An effort was made by the Dependents Fund people to obtain employment for our unemployed men. A labour Bureau was opened in a house in South William Street for the purpose, with very little result. There we moaned our sad economic lot, grouched, agitated, played cards and horse-played to boot. Many grandiose

schemes were put forward by the men for starting community farms or opening community business, but these got nowhere. Nevertheless, grants-in-aid were given to some to open small businesses, and for several other reasons. It was a truly saddening and disheartening prospect for many deprived as they were of their daily means of subsistence; it was hardly less so when men, some of whom were good craftsmen, changing over to "any kind of a job", some of them "blind alley" occupations. There were so many instances of this, some taking up work to wash dishes in a public institution, another man going as porter in a hospital charged with, among other duties, of carrying dead people to the mortuary. How he loathed the job! Some others of us, about nine, being sent to Co. Tyrone to do lumbering work of which we knew nothing. Another man, a clerk, accepting a job as a farm hand, board and keep, et cetera.

While these things were happening a new call was sounded - not really a new call, but made new by reason of the strange circumstances of the times we were living in - that was the call to return to our units and set about re-organising. That call found many of us ready and willing. So that within the following couple of months, towards the end of autumn 1916, the Dublin Brigade was re-organising. The difficulties confronting us were many and varied. Many companies were handicapped for officers, some for men, as quite a number of both categories were unfree. Our own Company suffered the loss of our Company officers who were in jail. A start had to be made; it was made and so we came together again. What a difficult task it was, confronted as we were with many problems of a perplexing and tantalising nature, one of which was the lack of drill halls, and another that we had to work not as

previously openly, but in secret, underground and undemonstrably for it was incumbent on us not to do anything that would jeopardise the possibilities of releases for our men still in jail and internment. Consequently we had to strike a new note, a novel one, but one born of necessity. Public halls and public buildings we could not use, under the name of Volunteer units. Instead we adopted other titles, clubs of one kind or other - football, athletic or dramatic clubs. Our Company bore the title "the Thomas Allen Athletic Club". But most of our assembling and meetings were carried out in the Phoenix Park. Thither we would go on certain week nights or Sunday mornings, always taking with us a football for "practice" after a bit of play and then we would rest and hold our meeting. We could not engage in drilling or military training then. The men responded well to this although it was not all they wanted. Soon, however, we were on the road to recovery. Mark Wilson became our Company Captain.

By such means we had our Company together when the General Amnesty which set at liberty the men interned at Frongoch was effected at Christmas time 1916. This gave additional impetus to the re-organisation of the Volunteers, with the result that the next month, January 1917, saw some of the fruits of the previous couple of months' labour. Our Company was in line with others in that respect, although we suffered the loss of our principal, all our officers, by reason of their being in jail. However, we had to make do, the officers so elected at the meeting in January, undertaking to relinquish positions on the release of other officers. Similarly the Battalion and the Dublin Brigade staffs got functioning again. Enthusiasm flagged a little due partly to the economic depression that had overtaken some of our men, but in the main the majority returned to their former allegiance and

work with increased vigour and unbounded zest. A good deal, if not much, of the glamour and fascination of former days had gone by the board. Our work and activities were less spectacular and exciting than that to which we were accustomed. How could it be otherwise when we could not work or show ourselves in public? When our best policy was to keep low, and away from the public gaze, especially the altogether too sensitive prying eyes of the Castle Authorities, driven as we were by the peculiar circumstances of the time and the fear that were it known that we were so engaged in volunteering, an injury might be done to and militate against, the prospects of the release of the sentenced prisoners.

All the while other elements were working in our favour. These had a political tendency. One of these was the Roscommon Election; the standard-bearer Count Plunkett, whose son, Joseph, was one of the Signatories of the Proclamation of Easter Week and who had been executed. This election was being fought by the Count in the interest of the "new spirit" - the Republican spirit - the spirit of the "living Republic". Besides it gave the Volunteer Movement a new fillip; hundreds of Volunteers as such backed the effort up in every way. Another favourable element was the surge of the young men to join the Volunteer Movement as notified to us by many of those serving in the ranks. The greatest care had to be taken in respect of newcomers; only those sponsored by Volunteers were admitted. In many instances these new arrivals were brothers, relatives or close friends of Volunteers: our Company benefitted by this infusion of new blood.

Later came the Longford Election and the Clare Election: Ireland politically was on the march.

The Volunteers, seizing this opportunity, afforded by these elections, threw themselves into the public manifestations exhibited which to them meant the continuation of the work left unfinished in Easter Week. Volunteers from Dublin mingled with Volunteers from other parts of Ireland to render assistance in both places as canvassers, election agents, drove motor cars from Dublin and elsewhere, any and every work that was considered useful. It was no uncommon sight to see our motor cars bearing the "I.R. 1916" registration plate, a practice that was contrary to the law. The assistance rendered by the Volunteers had important bearing on the results of the election, and their presence influenced and won many people to their side. Hence, side by side with the Volunteer activity the political movement Sinn Féin proceeded apace. Unfortunately, the political issue had to be fought out against Irishmen and it was not to the credit of the Irish Parliamentary Party backed up by the twin organisation "The United Irish League" and the "Ancient Order of Hibernians" (Board of Erin), choose to make the pace and run the political course. Yet there was much in the issue involved to suggest that most of the propaganda on our side, and indeed the very essence of these elections were directed against the British Government and British Authority, and in favour of the Easter Week Rising, and those who participated in it. "Sinn Féin abú", "An Poblacht abú", "Up Sinn Féin", "Up the Republic", "Remember Easter Week" and "Up Dublin" became common slogans on such occasions and in many other places as well. They rang far and wide in Ireland. The tide was turning.

Vindication of the men of Easter Week, vindication of what Easter Week represented was boldly and resolutely

expressed at election meetings. The voices of the people of Ireland were being raised in behalf of Ireland's sovereign right to be free - her right to be an Irish Republic. The torch was lit and there were few hamlets, villages, parishes or towns in Ireland where a republican, flag - the green, white and orange flag - was not in evidence. What matter if some called it "the Sinn Féin flag"; whatever name was applied, it was the flag which the Volunteers raised in Easter Week. What matter if the Volunteers were styled "the Sinn Féin Volunteers"; the intention was good and laudable enough. We in the Volunteers, in the Army of the Republic, might have reason to rile against such a description, but we knew that the intention behind it was Us. Such descriptions of us often caused us many a hearty laugh, for we knew that many of our Volunteers were not and would not be Sinn Féiners as such and had no association with the political entity called Sinn Féin. Of course, we had enough sense to know that the titles, Sinn Féin this and Sinn Féin that, were used by certain politicians and certain journalists to disparage us, and in many instances were applied for ulterior motives. Even the Rising of 1916 was broadcast by these same types of people as the "Sinn Féin Rebellion" or the "Sinn Féin Revolt".

Coming at such a time and such a way, the elections gave a decided urge to the Volunteers themselves to be up and doing, stimulating them, rendering encouragement to them in the efforts that were being made to put the movement on a sound footing. Greater than all these they focussed attention on the republican cause and the plight of the prisoners who then were in convict prisons - the felons of our land - as most of the candidates selected were volunteer officers, participants in the Rising, and in jail. Slogans like "Vote for McGuinness,

the man in jail for Ireland", "Vote for De Valera, the man in jail for Ireland" and in the case of Joe McGuinness the slogan "Put him in to get him out" had a popular appeal and was appropriate to the time. Also the fact that these men, if elected, undertook to abstain from Westminster gave emphasis to the demand for complete independence, to fight Ireland's fight at home rather than on the "flure" of the British House of Commons. This was an important, a necessary step forward in the direction of the goal of independence which negated the then Irish Parliamentary Party in going a-begging for Home Rule and satisfied to leave it there "for the duration of the war". The said war was going into its third year.

In the case of the Longford Election, a new element had been introduced which had an important contributory effect in deciding the issue. That was the spirited and and highly sensational letter of His Grace, The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Walsh. In his letter, which was published and widely circulated as election literature, Dr. Walsh referred to Ireland "having been sold" by the Irish Parliamentary Party. These were strong words. The publicity given to this pronouncement broke the bonds that united the Irish people to their political representatives, and gave the republican cause material that was to play a part in future election campaigns.

In this (Longofrd Election) 9th May, 1917, McGuinness, the Sinn Féin candidate, was serving a sentence in Lewes Jail for his part in Easter Week Rising. Mr. Patrick McKenna was the Redmondite candidate.

A poster depicting a man dressed in convict garb, was extensively circulated. Beneath this appeared the slogan "Put him in to get him out".

McGuinness on a recount was elected by a majority of thirty-seven.

By the election of Count Plunkett for Roscommon, Joe McGuinness for Longford and Eamon De Valera for East Clare, the republican movement and cause was put on the political map. The Volunteer Movement had in similar manner come to the fore. When eventually in June, 1917, the British Government opened the prison doors and Dublin and Ireland rejoiced at their homecoming, we in the Volunteers felt that we were on the march again. In consequence of these releases a re-shuffling took effect in the Volunteer Movement. This was inevitable if the Volunteer Movement was to become a living progressive force again. There was an urgency about the matter, in consequence of which elections were held soon after the releases in various units, Company Officers installed and Battalion, Brigade and Headquarters Staffs appointed. It must be noted that the procedure for selecting officers and N.C.Os. was by election - every Volunteer could go forward for election of officer, and every Volunteer had the right to vote for selecting those who were to command their unit. That practice prevailed since the inauguration of the Volunteers. Up to date it had proved to be a good and a bad system. It didn't always work out that the most popular man so elected was necessarily the best or most reliable officer. The Rising of Easter Week was an example of the greatness and the weakness of the system. Then, the majority of the officers turned out to fight, but some, perhaps a small number, failed to do so, thus causing a certain amount of havoc to their men and their units. Admittedly the countermanding order was responsible in part for the failure. Normally the arrangement of election worked out satisfactorily, when the men so selected were the "right stuff". In any event it

was considered the most democratic, if not the most military, way of providing leadership, by and with the men's consent.

By some chance or mischance a new factor had set into the order of things. Due in a large measure to the new political situation then accentuated by the several victories at the polls, the re-organisation of the political organisation, Sinn Féin, the assimilation of prominent Volunteer Officers into high positions in that organisation and the possibility of future elections, parliamentary and local, many former officers of the Volunteers opted to leave the Volunteer Movement on the grounds that they were taking up political work and activity. Not all, however, for some others preferred to combine political and volunteer work. Our Company was, unfortunately, placed in the position in which our former principal officers, Captain Fahy and Lieutenant McGuinness, refrained from going forward for re-election - obviously they would have been the men's choice. This was a big blow indeed. We were all sorry, and we hated their leaving us. We had, however, the consolation that they would bring into the political field the spirit and principles of the Volunteers and we knew that in their new capacity as in the old they would serve Ireland faithfully and nobly. As a token of our appreciation for their great work and service in our Volunteer Company we made each suitable presentations thus attesting our personal appreciation for work well done. So very reluctantly and sadly we were compelled to submit to the inevitable. At that election the choice of Company Captain fell on Peadar Clancy. He had been promoted a Lieutenant in Easter Week when he was in command of Church Street bridge. For sheer pluck and initiative his name

and fame shone out in brilliant colours. Coupled with these military virtues was his untiring zeal, unflagging energy and a wonderful sense of leadership. The defence of Church Street bridge was one of the epic exploits, second in importance to the famous Battle of Mount Street Bridge. For the space of six days and six nights Peadar and his men kept the British at bay. No British soldiers came across that bridge. He won admiration for his achievements in Easter Week. It was reasonable, then, that he should be selected as the Company's principal officer. Seán Flood became 1st Lieutenant and Frank McNally, 2nd Lieutenant, John E. Lyons as Adjutant and Mark Wilson as Company Quartermaster. The following were elected N. C. Os.: Patrick Byrne, Thomas McGrane, Seán Kennedy and the writer. But Peadar Clancy was not destined to remain long in occupation of that position, for soon after he took up the post of Captain to "G" Company, 1st Battalion. He was followed later by Frank McNally who was transferred to "F" Company, becoming Company Quartermaster there. Soon after that late Seán Flood became Company Captain, the writer 1st Lieutenant and Seán Kennedy, 2nd Lieutenant; Patrick Byrne, Thomas McGrane, Denis Holmes and Seán Bermingham as N. C. Os.

The political arm, Sinn Féin, had by this time become a practical force, and the Irish Volunteers as the military arm, though each was administered, controlled and governed as separate and distinct entities, were playing their part in shaping the course of events. Some of the higher officers of the Volunteers and others of lesser ranks worked in both capacities, rendering aid to the Volunteers and Sinn Féin alike. There was a real understanding between the two organisations which permitted each maintaining its own individual status and

independence on matters appertaining to organisation and activity; yet there was a genuine collaboration in several spheres. It was conceded that the Volunteers' point of view and ideals had a big influence on Sinn Féin policy. As Volunteers viewed the matter it was the only course possible or considered feasible if full effect was to be given to the declared aims of both, namely the aims enshrined in the proclamation of Easter Week - the establishment of the Irish Republic. It must be understood that the Sinn Féin organisation since its re-organisation about the time in question had adopted this ^{as} /its principal aim. Hot-foot on the heels of the released prisoners came the announcement that the British Government was to seek a new expedient to "try and settle the Irish Question". This was the setting up of what was then termed "The Irish Convention". The first meeting of this august body met in Trinity College on July 25, 1917, under the chairmanship of Sir Horace Plunkett. Representatives of the various Irish political parties, including Sinn Féin, were invited to send delegates. Sinn Féin, however, refused to recognise it - actually boycotted it. To the most casual political observer this convention represented nothing except an expedient, intended as it was to throw the blame on Irishmen for not settling "their own affairs" and to make it appear that the British, the sponsors of the expedient, were actually bursting all over to do justice to Ireland, when in point of fact the real reason was to undermine the Republican Movement and spirit which was so vocative of late as the previous elections had demonstrated. At the back of the idea was the all pervading and all important subject, that of the Irish contribution to the war - in other words, the threat of conscription, which as some publicists and

politicians, Irish and English, hinted might follow should the convention fail to agree. The real humour of the whole affair was the fact that the British already had some years previously "settled" the Irish Question by passing and putting on the "Statute Book", the Home Rule Act, the ideals of the Irish Republic thus entirely abrogating its former pre 1916 aims and settled policy.

If the Volunteers and Sinn Féin were re-organising, so too, the British Government through the Castle Authorities were not slow or inactive in Irish affairs. Through the medium of the Defence of the Realm Regulations and other laws they set into a policy of repression, persecution and prosecution, arresting and imprisoning Volunteers and Sinn Féiners alike, on the flimsiest charges and for all kinds of offences. Many such were arrested for making speeches, for drilling, etc. The Volunteers were again drilling quietly and quasi secretly. The Sinn Féin halls in many instances afforded shelter for Volunteer meetings, parades, and drilling. The British authorities were on the alert, their police and detectives showing particular interest in Sinn Féin and Volunteer activities. Sinn Féin halls and other public halls were continually under their surveillance and largely through their efforts the jail doors were flung open to receive Volunteers and Sinn Féiners, with the nett result that many good men in both were to find themselves, some for the second time, guests of "His Majesty".

These arrests, if they weakened the numerical strength of the Volunteers, helped in an extraordinary degree the republican cause. The threat of conscription which all through the war years was held over Ireland, contributed to swell the ranks of the Volunteers.

Towards the end of the autumn of 1917, that threat became more and more pronounced, with the result that the Volunteer Executive alive to the possibility of its enactment by the British Government felt compelled to impress on all units the necessity of treating the matter as one of supreme military and national importance. Recruiting and training increased, and every effort was made to secure much needed arms and war material. All Companies, including our own, worked at fever pitch in preparation for a slow down on the conscription issue.

Then came the hunger-striking in the various jails, the prime object of which was to force the British Authorities to grant "political prisoners" status, to our men who had been jailed for political offences. The British refused to comply to these demands, put into force the "cat and mouse" act and instead of releasing men who were in imminent danger of death through the long and tedious fast resorted to the policy of forcibly feeding the prisoners. Cruelty and callousness could go no further, for, as a result of the process of forcing food on weak and determined men, a tragedy occurred which brought shame and dishonour to the perpetrators, and admiration and honour even unto death to the victim who had been so mercilessly treated. The victim was Thomas Ashe, one of the noblest, bravest and staunchest Volunteer Officers of the period. When, at last, the British Government eventually released him and had his emaciated body placed in the tender care of the medical fraternity in the Mater Hospital, the tragedy was consummated, and Ireland and the Irish Volunteers were left to mourn the loss of a brave and devoted soldier. His death, perhaps more than his life, was a complete vindication of a true son of the Gael. It produced an opposite effect to that intended by the British Authorities.

Ireland awakened to a new life, a new resurgence. Indignation, resentment and protestation were expressed by the people of Ireland against the machinations and wickedness of the British Authorities. Ireland, politically, militarily and nationally was stirred to the depths by the great martyrdom of one who, during the testing time of his great fast, penned the beautiful edifying poem "Let Me Carry My Cross for Ireland, Lord", thus attesting his desire for self-immolation "Greater love than this no man hath than that he lay down his life for his friend". Thomas Ashe exemplified that fittingly by his ready and willing sacrifice. No clash of arms, no military achievement of our making could have produced results so advantageous to our cause better than the death of this true and gallant Volunteer Officer. His death secured amelioration in the conditions relating to prisoners.

"Nationality", December 8, 1917, reported:-

"The demands of the prisoners recently released from Mountjoy and Dundalk were that the agreement embodying the terms arranged with the Lord Mayor of Dublin should be printed and issued forthwith, that the dietary scale should be similar to that in force at Mountjoy from September 30th to November 12th, that visits be given every day, including Sunday, and, that these terms be extended to all Irish political prisoners. Mr. Austin Stack who desires this should be known for the benefit of future political prisoners, encloses the following copy of the demands made in Mountjoy :-

1. Improvement in diet in quality and quantity.
2. Unrestricted conversation.
3. Work optional.
4. Republican prisoners not to be at any time, or in any place, to associate with ordinary criminals.
5. One letter and one visit per day.
6. Unrestricted smoking.
7. Newspapers, books, and writing materials.
8. Parcels from friends.
9. Facilities for associated study and for class work.
10. Cells not to be locked until 9.45 p.m.; lights in cells until 9.45.
11. Association of work, or otherwise, throughout the day.

The death of this one man shook the very foundation of British influence and power in Ireland. Nay more, its effect was felt, beyond the confines and territory of Ireland, wherever Irishmen and Irishwomen were found. The news of the murder of Thomas Ashe reverberated throughout the world. Instead of weakening the Irish cause, that tragedy and that martyrdom proved that the cause of Ireland had men to defend it and men to die for it. Perhaps Ireland needed that sacrifice at such a moment of her destiny to prove to the world in the words of Davis that "righteous men shall make our land, a Nation once again". Public and national conscience was aroused to fury at the cruel action of the British Authorities in provoking his death, and at the same time rendered homage to the martyr. Dublin, which Mitchell in his scorn, taunted "ye city of bellowing slaves" rose to the importance of the occasion

by fittingly honouring "the dead who died for Ireland in the lone prison cell, far far apart from each kindred heart, of death pangs none can tell". Dublin, during the period of his lying-in-state at the Mater Hospital and the City Hall, the funeral and burial - gave signal and unmistakable proof of its sorrow for and pride of "poor Thomas Ashe."

For the second time within its short existence the Irish Volunteers openly officiated at the grave of "an unrepending unconquerable Gael" - O'Donovan Rossa in 1915 and Thomas Ashe 1917. Each gave public testimony of the existence and strength of the Volunteer Movement. But the funeral of Ashe epitomised not the burial of a man of a dead generation but one who represented a living generation of men who had fought and suffered and were fighting and suffering in Ireland's cause. In token of this the Volunteer Executive availed of the opportunity to come into the open again. It was not surprising then that on the day of the funeral of Thomas Ashe, October 1917, the Dublin Brigade, the county Battalion, and some country units of the Irish Volunteers were on the march again. Our Battalion was assigned the task of guarding Glasnevin Cemetery; assembling at Whitworth Road, we were marched there. A number of men of the Battalion, including a few of our Company, had been detailed for duty as firing party, in which capacity they had orders to accompany the remains from the City Hall through the city of Dublin to Glasnevin. Many of the men at Glasnevin were armed with revolvers that day. These, and the other men were placed at selected points and for certain duties, one of which was to protect the firing party from their arrival at, to their departure from the cemetery. All the entrances were guarded and men detailed to keep watch on police, detectives, who very likely would be present, as they were especially on the road outside,

and the entrances to the cemetery. Would the British interfere with the funeral because of the military display and the firing party marching through the city with rifles? There was an air of great expectancy prevailing in Volunteer circles that some attempt at interference would be made. To all intents and purposes we were breaking the law, and breaking it badly and severely for D. O. R. A. was still in existence, which definitely prescribed everything appertaining to military formations, the issuing of military commands, possession of and carrying of firearms, of illegal assembly, the according of military funerals and display of illegal flags on coffins, from houses or roof tops. Processions, demonstrations, meetings and funerals of a rebellious or seditious nature were taboo. We of the Irish Volunteers were an illegal body: all our acts, works and pomps were illegal and contrary to British law. Naturally we were on tip-toes that day during the couple of hours we were on duty until the funeral cortege reached the cemetery. What a seemingly unending procession - Volunteers, clergy, public representatives, public bodies, Trades Unions, political, cultural and national organisations of every creed, politics and class - every walk of life was represented. It compared, if it did not exceed in numbers, the O'Donovan Rossa funeral.

Our eyes and attentions were directed to the firing party - we had our duties to perform. Three volleys rang out, that echoed and re-echoed through the gloom and silence of the cemetery. We wondered would the British intervene at the sounding of these shots. No! The final stages of the burial were gone through. The Volunteer firing party withdrew, dissolved in the midst of the flutter that the rifle shots had caused, as if the earth had opened and swallowed them. Mysterious departure indeed!

Later when the Volunteers re-assembled and marched through the old gates of the cemetery, that self same firing party minus their rifles, took their places in the ranks as we were marched citywards. The rifles were safely got away, much to the bewilderment and confusion of the police who were stationed outside the cemetery, with as we were informed, orders to seize them.

By the same token, it was revealed afterwards that the British authorities had planned taking action against the Volunteer military display and armed firing party. They refrained from doing so due no doubt to no sense of condonement or mercy for the participants. Had they moved that day, Dublin would have been the scene of much bloodshed. Their inaction, however, was a Volunteer gain, which had a tremendous effect on the Irish cause in general and the Volunteer Movement in particular. For one man lost, the Volunteers gained hundreds of young men. Recruits poured in in increasing numbers, some Companies including our own, receiving more than its quota. This caused us many heart burnings and many anxieties for up to the time we were finding it hard to provide accommodation for the regular members of the Company as drill halls were not easily available. Fortunately soon after we secured premises kindly put at our disposal by two Sinn Féin Clubs, the Patrick O'Flanagan and Seán McDermott, respectively. The former occupied a house in Capel Street, the latter in St. Margaret's Place, North Circular Road. A number of us, officers and men were identified with these Clubs in one capacity or other. At the time Volunteers were advised by Volunteer Authorities to render assistance and if possible enrol in Sinn Féin on the understanding, of course, that such work would not interfere with their volunteer activities. Indeed many Volunteers identified themselves with Sinn Féin in order to advance the interest of and

gain new members for the Volunteers.

In making "parts of ourselves" which obviously was the procedure we had to adopt in trying to carry out training for a company that had increased almost a hundred per cent, three distinct groups had to be formed - one for the regular company and two groups of what was termed the auxiliary company. This gave work for all the Company officers and N. C. Os. a couple of nights a week. In that way we carried on for a number of months, by which time the Auxiliary Company had passed the recruit training stage. Then in 1918 a new Company, consisting of the auxiliary unit was formed - this became "H" Company, 1st Battalion. Our Company supplied many first officers and some of its N. C. Os. Seumas Kavanagh became Captain of that new Company, Tommy McGrane, 1st Lieutenant, both of whom were attached to our Company; also Bob O'Flanagan, Frank Flanagan, Matty McGrane, Joseph Sweeney, Seán O'Neill, Tom O'Brien, John O'Connor. Of Tommy McGrane it may be repeated joined "C" Company in 1915 with me, having served in Jacob's in Easter Week, escaping at the surrender. Seumas Kavanagh held the rank of Captain in another unit in the Volunteers prior to and up to Easter Week. Since his release from internment he had been associated with our Company - an officer without a command - a spare lance as it were. He, like Tommy McGrane, Bob O'Flanagan and Seán O'Neill, had been members of the Fianna, the latter two in the unit in which I had served.

As mention has already been made of the Seán MacDermott and Patrick O'Flanagan Sinn Féin Clubs, it may be necessary here to make a few observations. Since the re-organisation of Sinn Féin, arrangements had been made to form cumainn or clubs in every parish - in Dublin in every ward. Generally the clubs were named after Irish

patriots and it had become a regular practice to name them after deceased Easter Week participants. Thus clubs bore the names Roger Casement Cumainn, James Connolly, the Brothers Pearse Cumainn, etc. The Seán MacDermott Cumann was so named after Seán MacDiarmada who was a signatory of the Republican Proclamation of Easter Week and who was executed by the British on May 12th, 1916. The Patrick O'Flanagan Cumann was named after Patrick O'Flanagan, a member of our ("C") Company who was killed in action in 1916. He was one of four brothers - Michael, Frank and George - that answered the call to arms on Easter Monday morning, and all served in the Four Courts. On Friday night of that week Patrick was one of the party led by his brother Micheál, that was sent to reinforce the Volunteer position at North King Street and Church Street. In the bitter street battle ensuing Patrick was killed. The formation of that Cumann took effect in rooms over the shop owned by Maurice Collins in Parnell Street. Collins was a 1916 man, having served in the G.P.O. during Easter Week. Joseph Stanley, proprietor of the "Gaelic Press", who had been interned in Frongoch after Easter Week, became President of the Cumann, Mr. Christopher O'Flanagan, father of the patron, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Thomas Hoban and Mr. Charles Leydon, Hon. Treasurers, and Mr. James Doyle, Hon. Secretary. Joe Stanley, through his printing press, had and was rendering important service to the republican cause in turning out seditious literature and publications, song sheets and pamphlets, and because of that was not very much in the good graces of the Dublin Castle Authorities. Joe Stanley was proprietor of the "Gaelic Press", Upper Liffey Street and its printing establishment in Proby's Lane adjacent thereto. He also carried on a shop "The Art Depot" in Mary Street for the sale of Irish literature, publications, photographs, song sheets, etc. That shop was raided by

police on Dublin Castle orders on at least one occasion. Volunteers and members of O'Flanagan Sinn Féin Club assisted in salvaging and clearing some of materials prior to a projected raid. Joe became almost one of the first recruits to the auxiliary unit attached to our Company of which mention has already been made. Likewise, Seumas (Jim) Doyle, a veteran election worker, joined the auxiliary unit about the same time. Joe Stanley became at a later date a Lieutenant of "H" Company. Other members of the O'Flanagan Club that joined that auxiliary unit were, Tom O'Brien, the brothers Pierce and Tommy Hoban, sons of Thomas Hoban, one of the Treasurers.

Later that Cumann transferred to Capel Street. It boasted a large membership of Volunteers, men of various Companies of Volunteers like Joe Kinnerney, Guss Byrne, Mick O'Brien, Mick Douglas, Matty Molloy; of men of "G" Company, 1st Battalion, and members of the 2nd Battalion - Seán Kennedy, Frank O'Flanagan, the writer and Denis Ryan, and others of our ("C") Company.

Mention must be made of the secret military organisation, the I.R.B., which continued in existence after the Rising. I was initiated into this body early in 1917 by Frank McNally. To my surprise and amazement many members of the "circle" were dear companions of mine in the Volunteer Movement, some holding important posts therein. The I.R.B. was a live organisation with deep-rooted ramifications in the Volunteers, in Labour, Sinn Féin organisation, the Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Movement and Citizen Army. It was generally a recognised thing that officers, and where possible, N.C. Os. of volunteer units and especially the higher executive ranks should in turn be I.R.B. men. In this way the military

purpose and republic object of the movement remained secure. To be a good Volunteer was synonymous with being a good member of the I. R. B. and vice versa. Hence in the re-organisation of the I. R. B. and the Irish Volunteers a new chapter was about being written.

A convention of the Volunteers was held in Jones' Road in October 1917. Representatives from all units in Ireland were present. Our Company was represented that day.

On 27th October, 1917, Volunteer Joseph Norton of the Fingal Brigade was buried at Swords. Some members of the Dublin Brigade formed the firing party, including Tommy McGrane of our Company. In addition to other units our ("C") Company met at Kilmore Cross and marched to Swords to attend the funeral.

Of "Joseph Norton", the 'Catholic Bulletin' in a biographical sketch, wrote:-

"Early in 1914 he was among one of the first to join Irish Volunteers. On Easter Tuesday he promptly offered his services, Arriving with his comrades at the G. P. O., they were charged by Commandant James Connolly with the perilous enterprise of relieving the besieged Mendicity Institution held by Commandant Seán Heuston. They reached their destination through a very hail of machine-gun and rifle fire, but being cut off from headquarters after twenty-four hours' desperate fighting, were obliged to surrender. The death sentence passed on Norton was commuted to three years penal servitude. From the date of his release his health failed perceptibly, until on November 28, 1917, he succumbed to a severe attack of pneumonia."

Reporting on the funeral of the patriot the "Irishman" of December 8th, 1917, mentioned:-

"The remains of the late Mr. Joseph Norton who was sentenced to three years imprisonment for his connection with the Insurrection, was interred in Swords on Sunday There was a large representation of the Dublin Brigade I.R.A. - over 1,500 attending. The Cyclist Corps of the City Regiment was in full attendance... Cumann na mBan, Citizen Army, Fianna and some of the men who were with deceased in Lewes Jail. The firing party was selected by the Dublin Brigade. After the internment three volleys were fired over the grave and the "last post" sounded. The cyclists numbering a thousand, caused a sensation as they marched through the city and dismissed in O'Connell Street. The marching contingent dismissed in the suburbs."

The year 1918 was ushered in with the cloud of conscription hanging like a pall of death over Ireland. Nothing short of a miracle could avert the terrible menace. There was every indication that the British Government were prepared and determined to impose it by force, if necessary. So threatening and dangerous was the situation at the time that very special orders were issued by the Volunteer Executive concerning the matter. These orders definitely established the fact that the Volunteers would oppose conscription by force of arms. The temper and the patriotism of the Irish race aroused to high fever pitch by the threat was such as to give promise that not only the Volunteers but a united people would not readily submit to be "taken by the scruff of the neck" to fight another country's battle. So serious was the situation and so imminent the danger that Volunteer units were automatically placed on a war footing virtually on "active service". Full preparations were accordingly made to meet it. Each man was served with emergency rations, first-aid

field dressings and military equipment. Every available military weapon was placed at the disposal of the men. But by far the biggest and most important step was taken when, on the orders of Volunteer Executive, a complete recasting and re-grouping of Volunteers was carried out. This entailed the putting into effect of a new mobilisation scheme which could be termed a street and area operational zone for assembly and fighting. In the Dublin Brigade area a full census of Volunteers was compiled, and the city divided into districts. All men residing in these respective districts were formed into units under officers also residing therein. Each such group was required to be self-contained and capable of functioning in all military spheres. Officers, however, could be drafted to adjoining areas to command or supplement the personnel there. The underlying principle of this grouping and concentration of men was to ensure that men would be on the spot to take action at a moment's notice. Heretofore, Companies were constituted irrespective of their location beyond that the said Company was assigned to a particular Battalion which alone had a fixed area assigned it. Each Company had its own distinct mobilisation system. The Company personnel resided not necessarily in any particular area and were generally scattered at various points of the city. In illustration of the point, in our Company we had men residing in all parts of Dublin - in the north at such places as the North Circular Road, Glasnevin, Drumcondra, Ballybough; in the south at Rathmines, Donnybrook, etc., but quite a large number lived in or near the centre of the city.

In the new emergency scheme the principal operational plan to be centred in was/the residential area of each man. Each Battalion officer, Captain and Junior, was supplied with the names and addresses of the men in the areas to which they were

assigned. Besides these arrangements there was instituted a plan for the making of a survey of food, provisions, and stores within each area. Lists were compiled and recordings made of all forms of transport, commissariat, building suitable for occupation or as military posts, barracks and building occupied by the British, and all property including railways, bakeries, factories or business concerns that might serve military needs. In order to secure information on these matters each Company was allotted a specific area known as the "Company area", and the men utilised to the full to fulfil the duties incumbent on them at the time. Such work, however, takes time and much checking and cross-checking had to be done before a very reasonable report could be furnished.

If we were showing a certain measure of success in certain spheres, such as organisation and administration, and aided by a loyal and enthusiastic personnel, there was one weakness in our armoury and that was arms. These were coming in slowly, coming to us in various ways and by devious devices. We had a fair number of small arms, and but a few serviceable rifles, the latter purchased at high cost or otherwise obtained from British soldiers very cheaply. This was our big problem.

Obviously as far as the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers were concerned, in the event of conscription being imposed, it looked as if Dublin was to have another show down with arms. Our training at the time consisted of street and house-to-house fighting, and our men were advised to make themselves familiar with every part of their immediate districts. We took to training our men in rifle shooting in out of the way places in small numbers. Much of our drilling was carried out in similar

manner. Risks had to be taken to do these things as there was always danger of police intercepting us or interfering in our work as they were over vigilant at the time. Special precautions had to be taken to guard against surprise, cyclists being employed, or men to act as scouts in order to afford protection to the party drilling or at rifle shooting. Generally we operated in the fields at Finglas, Ballymun or Santry. The rifle for the firing practice consisted of a .22 miniature which had to be carried secretly to the "range". Sometimes our drilling and manoeuvres were carried out in such places late at night or unreasonable hours in the morning. The ordinary inhabitants got quite used to our comings and goings especially at Finglas. Once in the fields we felt ourselves miles and miles away from civilisation, and taking necessary and reasonable precautions, safe, and with plenty of space to move at will, in the event of the upholders of law and order making a descent on us. These manoeuvres or firing practices gave the men a great thrill; they always felt that they were "getting somewhere" instead of being couped up in small rooms training under extreme difficulties.

Thrills there were in other ways too, not the least of which was the business of transferring rifles from one part of the city to another. One had to have strong nerves and as the saying goes "hard neck" to carry out this work around this time - we had special men for this work - men, who were tall, active and of course, reliable. One of these was Ned Dolan. Such men had many thrilling experiences out-witting the police and bringing the guns to safety. So important was the work and so useful the men engaged on it, that the Company provided an overcoat sufficiently large for the rifles to be concealed beneath it and without hindering the movement of the carrier.

Often the men had to traverse a couple of miles on such work. In every instance the "carrier" was protected or guarded by a couple of other men, armed with revolvers. Quite a considerable number of rifles were transported in this way, not alone in our Company but other Companies as well. Sometimes a rifle or rifles had to be transferred for training purposes at company parades or for firing parties, of which the Thomas Ashe was one. There were a few occasions when different men were assigned to the job. One of these concerned the bringing of a rifle to the home of one of our men in which three of us were involved. Tommy McGrane was the "carrier"; Seán Kennedy and myself, the protectors. The night was dark but we had to pass through a part of Dublin that was fairly well lighted - from Parnell Street to Gardiner Street. We chose the main thoroughfares for most of the journey. As Tommy was just medium height and the rifle of a large pattern, certain chances had to be taken. He placed the rifle hanging inside his trousers, the butt placed under his arm pit, to discover, alas! that he could not walk in comfort. He decided to go temporarily lame, helped by Kennedy. In this fashion we travelled and travelled slowly, especially when passing "Bobbies" (a name applied at the time to policemen) of which we met a few on our journey. The "carrier" played the part well of the "poor lame man" although it was no cake-walk for him as several times the rifle slipped down protruding below the ends of his trousers, and in the process scratched his leg which had to be treated on our arrival at the appointed rendezvous.

Other men too had occasions for thrills of one kind or other, for instance in raids for arms which around this time was conducted in order to replenish stocks.

Some of these were "fools errands" as was discovered when the attempts were made. These raids were not of a haphazard nature or carried out on the off chance of success. They were the outcome of information sought and information obtained. Sometimes the information was genuine enough, but when the party detailed for the work arrived to seize them the guns or munitions were not to be found. They had departed elsewhere, perhaps some other Company had been on the job and seized them, or they had been taken over by the authorities. One such raid was that carried out by our Company on Alexandra Basin for rifles. When our party arrived what should they learn but that another Company had carried out the coup! Then again, information would be forthcoming that another unit was already in the field for the self-same raid. Then preference had to be given to the party first on the job. But not all raids were unsuccessful; and Companies, even our own, secured an odd rifle or some munitions as a result. Successful or otherwise, these raids necessitated a good deal of planning: the amount of men required, the placing of the men and their several duties, detailed orders to each man as to what was required to be done, arrangements for their assembly and departure. Time, secrecy and surprise were very important factors in such operations.

Chapter 14.

As has been already referred to the Irish Volunteers were playing a big part in Irish affairs, military and political. They were more than merely stepping out - they were in the van of the march for Irish Freedom. A peculiarly new opportunity was given in January and

February, 1918, to come into the open again. This was the occasion of the South Armagh Election when Patrick McCartan, the Sinn Féin Republican standard-bearer was contesting the parliamentary seat against Mr. Donnelly, the Irish Parliamentary Party candidate. In that election the Unionists and Nationalists combined in trying to defeat McCartan at the poll. It was a bitter hard fought contest, so bitter indeed as to call for the intervention of the Volunteers. Hundreds of Volunteers were despatched from Dublin to do guard, protection and other duties, most of whom were armed with revolvers. Prior to this, several Committee rooms had been smashed; election agents, many of them Volunteers, Officers and men, attacked and beaten, and electors sympathetic to the republican cause molested by Orangemen and Nationalists alike. The Volunteers were sent from Dublin in different groups and at various stages of the contest, especially the last week of it. Four of us, namely, Emmet Sweeney, Frank Carney, Dinny Holmes and the writer, were despatched to Dundalk, arriving there and reporting to Mick Brennan, the Co. Clare officer, and Peadar Clancy. Frank Carney and myself were sent to Crossmaglen. The few days before polling day we spent in canvassing, etc. and we were each night lodged with a Mr. Hearty, whom we learned was a returned Irish-American, and who had a beautiful house a short distance outside. On the early morning of the polling day a contingent of Dalcassians - men from the Co. Clare - numbering nearly a hundred strong, under Mick Brennan, arrived. They certainly were a hefty lot - few of them less six foot tall, having marched all the way from Dundalk, a distance of several miles. Were we happy and overjoyed to see them? These men and other Volunteers already there were divided into groups; officers appointed over them and placed in advantageous positions convenient to the polling booth and

the roads leading to the town. We had no sooner taken up our allotted positions when a large force of R. I. C. armed to the teeth, arrived on the same mission "to take over the place". As proof of their intention "to take over" they set about showing their authority by jostling the Volunteers from their positions. The Volunteers resented this action and when things assumed a very serious aspect one of the Volunteer Officers, Captain Thornton, went to the police barracks close by, interviewed the Inspector of the R. I. C. to object to the improper conduct of the police towards the Volunteers who were there in no other spirit but that of peace protectors. From that moment the Volunteers were not molested by the police. A short time afterwards an incident occurred which might have led to serious trouble. It appeared some supporters of the opposing political candidate staged a scene which called for the intervention of the Volunteers. That scene might have resulted in bloodshed but for the cool heads, steady nerves and fine discipline of the Volunteer Officers whose tactful handling of a delicate situation had the effect of restoring calm before harm was done. Even the police authorities were amazed at the forbearance, discipline and tact shown by the Volunteers, and it was noted that they relented somewhat in their attitude towards us. The prompt action displayed by the Volunteers "nipped in the bud" a possible source of danger and annoyance, and served as an example to evil-doers, with the result that the Volunteers were looked upon with respect for the remainder of the day. Other scenes there were, but these were of a "minor" character and easily dealt with by our men. After a few hours' stay some of the R. I. C. party left the arena and the area, and we felt ourselves honoured to be regarded as the defenders

of the peace, which we undoubtedly were, politicians notwithstanding.

We had good reason to assume that the real cause for our success lay in the direction of our strength that day. Had we been smaller, less disciplined and organised, quite a different fate might have befallen us, for we knew that there were "ugly people", political tools, on the opposing side available to make the time hot and heavy for the Sinn Féiners as we were called. Many tough fellows from Belfast had been imported into the constituency, and we had reason to know that a combination like the Molly Maguires and the Carsonites were capable of many things besides passing resolutions as the election campaign had demonstrated before the advent and presence of the Volunteers.

When the polling booth was closed that night a number of us were detailed to accompany or escort the ballot boxes to Newry. This business of guarding the ballot boxes had become a regular ritual with the Volunteers on such occasions. Thus two escorts were provided, the R. I. C. and the Volunteers. The Presiding Officer and his staff, as well as agents of the respective candidates, with the ballot boxes, plus the two escorting parties, formed quite a formidable procession, numerous cars being in requisition for the job as we wended our way through miles and miles of country to the rendezvous. The big thrill was passing through Unionist strongholds, our tricolour - the Republican Flag - waving gaily and gallantly from our cars. It was quite late that night when our party arrived in Newry where the boxes were safely deposited and our Volunteer party were conducted to a public hall which served as quarters for the Volunteers. Here we met scores of Volunteers from Dublin and men who

had been on duty in different parts of the constituency. All were in great form and had different tales to tell of their experiences. Leo Henderson was in charge of the "barracks". Captain Frank Daly of "B" Company was one of the officers. Here we, Carney and myself, picked up Emmet Sweeney and Dinny Holmes, also Tom O'Reilly of our Company. We spent the night there. The next morning before breakfast time Tom staged a little scene by way of a ruse to get out of barracks for a good meal as he was mad hungry and he didn't feel like partaking of the barrack "board". Agreeing to accompany him, Sweeney, Carney, Holmes and myself were escorted to the door. Approaching the Volunteer guard Tom requested "Pass prisoner and escort" and before we knew what it was all about we had "broke barracks". Repairing to a nearby side street we found ourselves in a café, styled "A Soldier's Café". Here were we, soldiers of another Army, enjoying a good substantial breakfast at a moderate fare. Even the uniforms of some of our party and our tri-coloured ribbons which we wore in our hats, contrasting with some of the pictures on its walls, after which we four of us were photographed.

On that afternoon we departed from the "barracks" and marched to the railway station. On the way we were met by a hostile group that seemingly was bent on giving us a "warm and not too pleasant send-off". We were belaboured with stones and iron bolts on the way, indulged in by men and women alike. We had been tested in worse situations than that, and to the credit of the officers and men of the Dublin Brigade after a few skirmishes and charges we reached the train in good order. The return journey was uneventful until we reached Amiens Street where lo, and behold! a concourse of people several thousand strong, this time our friends, were assembled to greet us home. What a contrast to the scenes enacted by our Newry cousins!

As we marched away citywards we felt after all that our failure to return McCartan in the election was indeed compensated by the presence of our own good supporters in Dublin on the occasion of our homecoming.

The important part which the Irish Volunteers played in that election could not be better described than the tribute paid that body by "The Irishman" of February 9th, 1918:

"The Irish Volunteers' Return from South Armagh Election".

"The methods employed to ensure that England should win South Armagh we have described as blackguardly. The word is strong, but not strong enough. Again and again the lives of the Sinn Féin leaders and workers were endangered, always from behind hedges and mostly in the dark. Several attempts were made on the life of Countess Markievicz and it was only defective markmanship that on numerous occasions prevented Sinn Féin speakers and organisers being seriously maimed. A regular reign of terror was instituted against voters suspected of Sinn Féin sympathies. So dangerous did the conditions become that at the request of Sinn Féin the Irish Volunteers adopted the unprecedented course of sending detachments of trained men into the constituency to protect both organisers and voters. But for these and the salutary effect produced by their splendid physique and discipline many of the Sinn Féiners would not have got away with their lives. This may seem an exaggerated statement to those who had not experience of South Armagh. But it is the plain blunt truth. But for the presence of the Volunteers the bulk of the 1,305 electors who voted for McCartan

would never have been allowed to reach the poll..... "

Writing of the scenes on arrival of the Volunteers, the same paper said:

"As the four thousand Irish Volunteers with twice the number of cheering citizens marched through the streets of Dublin on Saturday night on the return of their comrades from Armagh, I heard one spectator say to another "You would think they had been victorious". It was not a question of thinking. They were victorious.....

"President De Valera had narrow escapes; Seán McEntee was wounded and Frank McGuinness of Longford, driving to his hotel from a meeting at eleven o'clock at night was rendered unconscious by an iron bar hurled at the car from the shelter of a ditch. Harry Boland was similarly in danger of his life and so was Seán O'Mahony and several others. Only two assaults were made in the open - one where a Hibernian attempted to drive a pike through De Valera, and the other on Countess Markievicz at Lislea, on which occasion a huge paving stone only missed her by inches, and the advancing Hibernians, sorry that she had escaped, pelted her with sods and mud that a gentleman of the party had to draw a revolver to save her. This was only one of many attempts on Madame. Some of the A.O.H. apologised for the Lislea affair.....

The Belfast batonmen are... mercenaries, pure and simple, hired as required and ready (for a plentiful supply of drink and 5/- a day) to do any little job from breaking up a meeting to waylaying a person politically obnoxious to their employers. Armagh had them last week and such a reign of terror did they establish, such unparalleled intimidation did they

employ, that Sinn Féin was compelled to ask the Volunteers for Volunteers to protect its workers and its voters. But for the presence of the Irish Volunteers in Armagh the Sinn Féin casualty list would have been a heavy one. The clean manly courage of the patriot was pitted against the bullying methods of the hired riffian and mercenary, skulked and fled when faced with the man.

Caisibre MacColm."

Apropos of the reign of terror "Nationality" of February 9th, 1918, reported:

"In Crossmaglen alone was there a majority of catholic voters against Sinn Féin. There for three weeks a reign of terror had been instituted by Devlin's Ribbonmen and Carson's Orangemen against the voters with very good success..... The ambushes laid at night along the road by Messrs. Dillon's and Devlin's followers were imitated later on by the followers of Sir E. Carson."

The "Dundalk Examiner" reported:

"When Mr. Fearon who presided at a Sinn Féin meeting at was returning home on Sunday night he was set upon and savagely beaten. His purse was also taken from him."

"When Mr. De Valera was motoring to Crossmaglen on Sunday a supporter of Mr. Donnelly, marching in an A. O. H. procession, thrust a ten-foot pike through the wind-screen and inflicted a gash on Mr. McEntee who accompanied Mr. De Valera."

"When an Armagh contingent of cyclists were leaving Crossmaglen on Sunday they were set upon by a band of rowdies and assaulted with stones, so they had to return. The police who were present in force took no action, and Mr. Brennan ordered a charge by one of the Companies of Volunteers. The stone-throwers scampered across country. The windows of MacCartan's Committee rooms in Crossmaglen were broken on Sunday."

"Messrs. James and John McQuill, Dundalk, who had charge of the arrangements for the conveyance of supporters of Dr. MacCartan, were arrested this Wednesday morning by 18 members of the R.I.C. and removed to Mountjoy."

"The Belfast Newsletter" in an editorial January, 18th, 1918, said:

"All the time there are tens of thousands of young unmarried men in Ireland drilling in view of another rebellion and it (the Government) refuse to take them,"

The Irish Unionist amendment proposing to apply military conscription to Ireland was (says the

"Independent" of January 1918). rejected in the British House of Commons by 138 to 47 votes.

"Ireland", said Mr. Archdale, "was living under the protection of the British Army and Navy, and was it fair that she should only contribute 2 p.c. to the fighting forces as against 60 p.c. from England? The only effect of exempting Ireland was to throw many thousands of able-bodied young men into the ranks of Sinn Feiners, an avowedly pro-German and Anti-English organisations."

He admitted that the application of conscription might cause a little trouble but asserted that if it were not extended a great deal more trouble might result after a bit. The amendment would only mean that there should be equality of sacrifice which would bring into the army 150,000 of as good fighting men as could be found in the world.

Mr. Coote denied the allegation that Ireland would not submit to conscription and said if the Government had not quailed before threats the Easter Week rebellion would never have been heard of. When the rebellion did take place Mr. Asquith who was then Prime Minister, went over and patted the rebels on the back. By so doing he had encouraged the spirit of rebellion.

Mr. McKearn contended that it would take six soldiers to arrest one conscript. The mass of the population were Sinn Féiners and that meant that they were also pro-German.

The "Times" (according to 'Irish Independent' report) said:

"An Irish settlement is essential as an Imperial necessity. The Irish question is hampering the Cabinet in all parts of the world in its conduct of the war, as instanced in Australia, America, Russia and amongst the allies generally."

The "Irish Independent" of February 4th, 1918, reported:

"President Wilson received Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington at the White House, Washington, on January 11th, where she presented a petition signed by many prominent Irishwomen asking that the United States recognise the political independence of Ireland".

Ireland in Congress - Miss Rankin's Resolution:
(Editorial "Butte, Independent, Harrison Ave., Montana,
January 5th, 1918):

"Miss Rankin is certainly in distinguished company when she raises her voice in Congress for the recognition of Irish Independence. She has with her in this demand not only the President of the United States but all the allied statesmen of the Entente who have over and over again declared their determination to liberate the small nations. The great majority of the people of Ireland have testified in the most unmistakable manner that they

are not satisfied and never will be satisfied with any English form of Government and that the establishment of an Irish Republic alone will solve the question. Moreover, President Wilson, Miss Rankin and every member of both Senate and Congress as well as the great mass of the American people are aware that Ireland has contributed far more than any other small nation in the upbuilding and development of the American Republic since its inception to the present time. The Irish the world over are deeply indebted to Miss Rankin for her noble championship of their cause at a time when those in this country who are more concerned for the welfare of England than they are for the best interests of America, are with lying lips scurrilously defaming all who raise their voice in behalf of Irish freedom from the withering and despotic yoke of England. During Senator Walsh's last visit to Butte, the editor of this paper laid this aspect of our cause for entering the war before him and urged upon the Senator with all the emphasis at our disposal the crying urgency of the Irish claim to national recognition and independence. The Senator was sympathetic and thanked the writer for placing the attitude of Ireland before him."

"New Ireland", February 2nd, 1918:

"The Election (South Armagh) has nothing to do with Westminster. Sinn Féin does not give a thought to that contemptible talk shop. The Irish Party too, is not pouring out money and energy in order to secure one more orator in the English Parliament.

The Westminster policy is as dead as a door-nail, and the Party know it..... Talk of Westminster is simply bluff and claptrap. As far as Ireland is concerned, parliamentarianism with its jobbery, its speeches, its Statute Book and the rest is dead and buried; never again to be resuscitated. The issue in South Armagh is this: "What do you want instead of the rule of Westminster and the Castle?"

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Of the Irish Party that journal wrote:

"..... There are indeed several gentlemen now strutting and speechifying in the country who arrogate to themselves the title of Irish Party. They flatter themselves. We hoped in vain that these men would see that their work was done, that their weapons were useless for this great international struggle which promises Irish freedom. They will not see, they persist in intruding themselves between us and our destiny, they are seeking to save England from Irish America, and to separate us from our fellow-brothers, workers across the seas..... The choice lies between two demands - the message of T.P. O'Connor or the embassy of Dr. MacCartan. Which of them speaks for Ireland? The man who sailed in an English cruiser, who probably boasted of Lloyd George's contribution to the Party funds, who has never dared to address an open meeting of Irishmen in the streets, who from his shelter - the Knickerbocker Hotel, libels his fellow-countrymen, spread lies about German gold, cables home false news about his "success" (which is now flatly contradicted by the English Press), the man who despatched secret service money to John Redmond in

order to win South Armagh.

Mr. Donnelly stands for the man who despatched T. P. O'Connor on his dirty errand; his return for South Armagh would be hailed by T. P. O'Connor as Ireland's endorsement of his mission. Of course that would be a lie for South Armagh is but one constituency and without the Unionist vote and the undemocratic register the Party would not have a ghost of a chance even here. He is chosen not to make speeches in Westminster but in order to pretend to America and to the world Ireland is behind the Party which cringed and whined to Asquith and Lloyd George, which accepted quarter Home Rule for three-quarters of the nation. Dr. MacCartan stands for Ireland with the awakened cause of nationality and manliness "

On February 19, 1918, the British Government issued an order against the carrying of arms, followed by a proclamation on March 13th, prohibiting band parades. In the meantime a new move to combat conscription was initiated which became known as the Mansion House Conference. This body consisted of representatives of various political parties - Sinn Féin and the Irish Parliamentary Party and also Labour, presided over by Cardinal Logue. Arising out of their deliberations the 21st April, 1918, was agreed upon as the date for signing an anti-conscription pledge. These were to be signed outside church doors. Labour to go one better in emphasising their opposition to the enforcing of conscription, carried out a one-day strike on the 23rd April, on which day the Irish Volunteers rendered help in seeing that the strike was enforced. But apparently the British Government was not in the mood to acquiesce to Irish demands, for on May 11th it

was announced that Field Marshal Viscount French was sworn in as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the Right Hon. Edward Short, K.C., M.P. as Chief Secretary, which appointments lent colour to the belief that the British intended to go ahead with their plans to force young Irishmen into their armed forces. These appointments suggested to the Irish mind, and to the Irish Volunteers in particular, that the British authorities planned to introduce conscription and to enforce it by all the military force at their command. Viscount French was known to be favourable to the strongest possible measures to bring Irishmen on the side of England in the war, were one to judge the appointment as a military necessity which had much to commend itself from the British point of view, not merely to bring in recruits as to destroy the Republican Movement then showing signs of virility, and development, despite all efforts and laws to curb its growth.

There was one bright spot on the Irish horizon which even threats, proclamations and ukases failed to dim. That was the wonderful solidarity, the extraordinary unity and magnificent spirit of the Irish race in the face of impending danger. Standing unflinching and erect behind the Mansion House Conference - behind their Bishops and their leaders they awaited the coming storm, if come it must with resolute calm and composure, trusting in the justice of their cause and their rights as freedom-loving people. Behind that Conference, nay superimposing it, stood the Irish Volunteers on guard, watching and waiting for the zero hour of trial and danger, which seemed to be fast approaching. The Irish Volunteers had no misgivings and no doubts that if Britain sought to impose conscription militarily she would apply it with full vigour and with maximum force, showing neither mercy nor

consideration on leaders or people who would deign to oppose its operation. Furthermore, the Irish Volunteers, indeed republicans generally, believed that as a military measure it should have to be met militarily - no other course was possible or feasible should the British apply force. Yet there were some people outside the Volunteer Movement, whose plan of campaign suggested the adoption of passive resistance or non co-operation much on the principle of "conscientious objectors", arguing that if all the young men acted in that way the British Government would be easily beaten. In other words, the British could conscript But the Irish would not serve or fight for them. The Irish Volunteers had only one mind on the subject and that was summed up in the slogan "No conscription - shoot straight".

Obviously the British military mind was made up on the matter. There were hints that the whole problem was to be placed in military hands; hints even that as a first step the country would be put under martial law. Another hint was that economic pressure would be brought to bear on young men in order the more easily force them into the British armed forces. There were many loyal employers and loyal business establishments willing and capable to co-operate in such a plan, as evidence their treatment of Irish Volunteers after the Rising, not to mention that some of these had during these war years "encouraged" their employees to "join up", and any that did not do so were shown the door in a quiet unobtrusive way on the grounds that "owing to the war they had to economise", etc. Such things were possible in a country that had been made a plaything of during the war by some politicians, publicists and commercialists who were true Imperialists and well disposed towards fighting other people's battles,

remained at home in luxury and comfort. These people had not missed any opportunity to do "their bit" by voice, pen and finance, their big regret being that "the fighting Irish" did not flock to the colours in greater numbers. To make matters worse for them, the Irish appeared to have gone mad, politically mad, and totally indifferent to the allied cause of fighting for civilisation, humanity and the defence and liberties of small nations.

Heretofore these same exponents of Britain's war policy had used their power and influence to win voluntary recruits. In season and out of season they had advocated the establishment and maintenance of the "Irish Regiments" in the British Army, appealing for men to keep the gaps filled/^{trying/}to prove that it was Ireland's war, and in consequence the Irish race should consider it a high honour to fight and die in France or Flanders for Ireland's cause. Their one regret was that voluntary enlistment had failed as a policy and an expedient to bring in the much needed recruits which British politicians, war lords, and the press held to be necessary as Ireland's contribution to the war. A vicious, anti-Irish campaign was conducted by the English press by English publicists and propagandists to discredit Ireland and the Irish people.

A week after the appointment of Viscount French as Lord Lieutenant, to be precise on the 18th May, 1918, the British Government discovered a "German Plot". In consequence of that discovery they instituted widespread raids throughout Ireland and captured and imprisoned a large number of prominent republicans, many of them high placed Volunteer Officers. Obviously the British had taken the cue from their own Press, publicists and propagandists! These had been propagating the bogey that Sinn Féiners and the Republicans were pro Germans.

One such example of that was afforded by an interview given by Sir F. E. Smith to the "Boston Post", January 14th:

"The Sinn Féin (said he) is distinctively pro-German and part of the pro-German propaganda."

Was it not very significant that this move should be made at a time when the anti-conscription movement and the East Cavan Election were in full blast. Significantly the British authorities arrested election officials, agents, speakers and workers who were then engaged in the latter place working for the candidature of Mr. Arthur Griffith, the republican candidate, thus inflicting a serious blow to election plans. Many of those arrested were indispensable from the point of view of election procedure and organisation. Substitutes were obtained and election work continued, the members of the Irish Volunteers lending a hand in the different phases of the work.

This election contest was hard and bitter, though not so disorderly as South Armagh. Starting in the latter part of April or early in May quite a good deal of work was done when the German Plot was discovered. Workers for the election poured in from every part of Ireland, the vast majority of these being active Volunteers. In response to the request of one of the election agents, Joe Stanley, I repaired to a place called Shercock, there to take over the local committee rooms. Stanley, by reason of his business in Dublin, was unable to devote all his time to the election work and had to be content with paying week-end visits or hurried calls there. He was a good task master, an active indefatigable worker, a forcible platform speaker;

in short a very useful man. On one occasion he entertained an election crowd by his rendering of a newly composed ballad which he, it was said at the time, was regarded as the author. The title was "Brittania to East Cavan":

East Cavan, dear, I'm proud of you!
 Says the Grand Old Dame Brittania.
 I know you'll vote red, white and blue
 Says the Grand Old Dame Brittania.
 You wont believe the Sinn Féin lies
 And you'll give Lloyd George a grand surprise
 He'll send conscription in disguise
 Says the Grand Old Dame Brittania.

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In Parliament there's a quiet nook
 Four hundred pounds and a fishing hook,
 Come along and see the Statute Book
 Says the Grand Old Dame Brittania.

This ballad was circulated as election literature and was sung at many of the election rallies in at least our part of the constituency.

The spirit of the local Sinn Féin and Republicans of Shercock and adjoining areas was indeed magnificent. They gave ample proof of their enthusiasm and patriotism in every phase of the contest, all were eager and zealous in trying to get "our men in", that no value was placed on time or labour devoted to the performance of whatever duties required to be performed. The fact that the election campaign was being conducted at such an important epoch in Ireland, history had the effect of spurring our supporters and workers to increasing

intensive endeavours and even at great sacrifices to themselves conducted to pub East Cavan, one of the gaps of the North, in step with East Clare, Roscommon and Longford. No words of praise or commendation would adequately do full justice to as fine a body of men and women as those whose lot it was to give proof of their nationalism and nationhood, which was typified by that election contest. All were truly wonderful - Mr. Leavey, the President; Mr. Owen McEnroe, the Secretary; Mick Sheridan, Mr. Fidgeon, the Smiths and the O'Reillys, and all the various clansmen of the several districts, Kilann, Knockbride, etc. Mr. Leavey had been a former Justice of the Peace. He resigned that position as a protest against the British Government's treatment of Ireland. Mr. Fidgeon, a reputed businessman, in whose home Joe Stanley and I stayed, was as fine a type of Irishman as one could hope to find within the four seas of Ireland. These two men and indeed Mr. McEnroe, Secretary of the local Sinn Féin Cumann, who was proprietor of a drapery store there, were men of straw and prestige in the locality, as also in the local Sinn Féin which then showed signs of great activity and virility, and stood well up to the strain imposed by the election. As regards the rank and file they too gave of their best, and were ever ready to perform any work allotted them.

Several other people from other parts of Ireland rendered assistance: Seumas Brennan and Dinny Holmes from Dublin, and Mr. Pinkman, a clerical student from Belfast, who proved his worth and value in the election Committee Rooms, and at a time when help was urgently needed. Besides the election opened up the possibility of extending the range of the Volunteer Movement by organising a company in the district. So Dinny Holmes and myself set to work and in a short time after

preliminary training the Company was put on a regular footing, and the fact notified to G.H.Q. in Dublin. Dinny also kept in touch with a Company of Volunteers in County Monaghan. After a little while we assisted in forming a branch of Cumann na mBan in Shercock. Holmes was by this time getting busy in training the various groups, in which all and sundry co-operated in every conceivable way. Ample facilities were given the men to step it out to the several election rallies at Baileboro, Cootehill and other outlying places, armed with hurleys, which by the way was quite an innovation to many and in which Mr. Leavey came to the rescue by allowing one of his lovely trees to be felled for the purpose. These men made a gallant show and that at a time when the carrying of hurleys was prohibited, when drilling and marching of Irish Volunteers was declared to be illegal, and when in the heat of the election fray a "German Plot" was made the excuse for arresting and deporting many of our best in the Republican Movement.

Synchronising with the announcement of the German Plot, a big election rally was held in Baileboro. Our contingent of republican supporters, with the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan duly participated. A large force of R.I.C. were on duty when we arrived, a number of whom accompanied us to the meeting rendezvous. Our advanced column of Volunteers halted on orders of D. Holmes. Immediately some officers and men of the R.I.C. made a move in his direction. The Volunteers formed a cordon around him. As I issued orders to the group of Cumann na mBan a similar scene occurred. Obviously the police intended giving effect to their law prohibiting volunteer drilling, etc. In the face of the threatening attitude of the assembled Volunteers the police hesitated.

To our surprise, Holmes and I were surrounded by Volunteers and ushered away from the precincts. Later we rejoined the contingent and returned to Shercock. The next day information was conveyed to some of our supporters that the Sergeant of the place had gone into Cootehill to make a report. Holmes in the meantime had returned to Dublin on business arranged some days previously. I was advised to keep low. That afternoon it was arranged I should go to Cootehill. A car would pick me up a couple of miles on the main road. My presence on that road would not attract much attention as I was accustomed to walk there on many an afternoon. On that occasion I met the R. I. C. Sergeant who was cycling from the Cootehill direction. Beyond a "Good evening" he showed no unusual interest in myself or my actions. Thought I, "maybe he is like the good puss that prefers to play before destroying his prey". Soon however, I reached the place where the car was waiting, and travelling the remaining journey I arrived safely and well into Cootehill where I reported to Sinn Féin Headquarters at the White Horse Hotel, saw Joseph Dixon, Solicitor, who seemed to be in charge, who informed me that the place had been raided by the R. I. C. the night before and many of our leading men were arrested.

Hearing my story he thought Cootehill would not be my best place and suggested my going to Kilnaleck which I declined. Later he informed me that there was a meeting of Volunteers arranged to be held at Killann. "Would I go there?" I agreed, and was soon safely delivered there. Now Killann was only a couple of miles from Shercock and in that police district. I received many offers or invitations to several houses, eventually agreeing to stay with the Smiths at Knockbude. I did not wish to leave the constituency until after the election.

My presence in that neighbourhood was a closed secret as the following incident will prove. The following night a caller arrived inquiring for a Mick Malone (this name I had adopted). My good friends were suspicious. The stranger informed them that he was living in O'Reilly's and that he would call in the morning, which he did, and so Dinny Holmes and myself became re-united under strange circumstances. He had arrived from Dublin the evening before and our friends in Shercock anxious for his safety and aware of the risk he was running (which he had no prior knowledge of as the machinery to give effect to the ukase of law and order had been set in motion during his short absence) smuggled him to my domiciliary rendezvous. How he must have ranted and cursed against the mystery surrounding my change of name, for none of my new neighbours, to their eternal credit, appeared, even professed, not to know, although in fact they did know my real name, or to divulge it to a stranger! Was not that true neighbourliness and absolute friendship?

For the space of a week or two we were kept well in touch with election work, and thanks to the more than generous attentions of the Smiths and the O'Reillys lived on the fat of the land, being treated more like prodigals than fugitives. We had many reasons to pray blessings on these people and their households. All were wonderful, not alone in their many kindnesses but in their superb patriotism and doing everything for their "love of the cause". These people, indeed all the grand people of Shercock and vicinity, who were engaged on our side in that election, not alone warmed to us but treated us royally. Their big boast was that we were from Dublin - "men from Headquarters" - as they so often proudly acclaimed us, which gave them great satisfaction and us the feeling that

we were being hero-worshipped. One of the best passports to their hearts and their homes was the knowledge that one was out in Easter Week, which they considered to be the greatest achievement. The election opened up for them possibilities for becoming enrolled in units of Volunteers and Cumann na mBan and they had gone eagerly, sincerely and enthusiastically to that work.

Came the polling day, and I had the task of looking after the transport of electors in the neighbourhood of Knockbride, taking up duty, on a miserable wet day at _____ Cross road, a few miles from Shercock. That night we obtained various snatches of information, some of which suggested that our cause had gone well. Enquiring of one old man "How did things go on to-day?", we received the perhaps strange reply: "Rotten, it was the worst election day I ever had". Inquisitive to find out why that was so we were coolly informed, "It was too quiet - not a row all day"; our good friends, so we were told, had gone into "town expecting some (trouble) even carried a stout ash plant, just in case, you know, and came home without having to use it once". He was truly bewildered if not shamed at the quietness of the proceedings, saying it was not like the old days when elections were breezy affairs. We knew that as far as Sinn Féin and the group of Volunteers were concerned such "quietness" meant order and discipline, and these had been maintained up to the last, although the Molly Maguires and the Orangemen were not an insignificant factor in the area, helped of course by their compatriots from nearby County Monaghan.

Next day, our election work over, we decided to return to Dublin, Dinny cycling and I to make my way to Kingscourt by train. Skirting Shercock, our danger point, I arrived at Leavy's home. Mr. Leavey was game enough for

any task. He brought his pony and trap to meet me at Fidgeon's place which was situated on the Kingscourt end of the "town". We travelled that good six miles; he with pride and honour to do anything for his friends, and I, - well, I only wished the pony could fly! Several times we got a jolt to our nerves - I did, but not Mr. Leavey, for he was as calm and cool as if he was only on a day's outing - as motor tenders passed us on the road going towards our destination - tenders of armed R. I. C. released from their election duties returning to their various stations. Luckily they had no interest in us beyond expecting us to keep the road clear. What a wonderful man was Leavey? A former "man of the law", he proudly boasted, along that Kingscourt road, that he had given his J.P. ship "over to him"/his pony, and he never for a moment regretted his action for resigning: "it was the least he could do for the country". From my slight knowledge of him gained by personal observation and from other sources, he wielded a power among our republican friends in that portion of East Cavan and won esteem and favour accordingly. I was downright sorry to part company with him as the train in which were a hundred or so R. I. C. men steamed out of Kingscourt Station to bring me homeward; sorry to to have parted company with good supporters of our movement there, having spent six weeks among them, six weeks that caused me to have and to hold a very good opinion of them.

East Cavan Election 1918.

In a pamphlet entitled "Father O'Flanagan's Suppressed Speech", issued at the time of the East Cavan Election:- The following is a verbatim report of the speech delivered to 10,000 people at Ballyjamesduff on

Sunday, May 26th, 1918, by the Rev. M. O'Flanagan, C.C., Crossna, Vice-President Sinn Féin. The Censor refused to allow even one word of the speech to be published. Father O'Flanagan, who received a great ovation, said:

"Men of Breffni Within the last few days England has started one of the many campaigns against Ireland, and the first action in the campaign is the effort to fill the whole world with a poison-gas of lies and misrepresentation.... They cannot calumniate us to-day by calling us pro-Irish and therefore they try to do by calling ^{it/} us pro-German. They are trying to persuade the world that this quarrel that exists to-day, and is acute, between Ireland and England is a quarrel that began since Germany was discovered four years ago but the quarrel between Ireland and England will go on until Ireland is completely separated from England under that beautiful tricolour flag of the Irish Republic. They imagine they can poison the Irish people by their campaign of lies, by telling the world that the source of the inspiration of this movement of ours comes from the banks of the Rhine and not from the banks of the Shannon..... and this little Welsh thimble-rigger has got his supply of thimbles on his little table. One one you have printed Home Rule; on another of the timbles you have printed the Convention and on another you have Devolution; and he is not content with these thimbles. They are not enough to hide his false fear of self-determination and national liberty.

He is taking up another thimble now which he calls Federalism, and he imagines that he will be able to persuade the world that under some of these thimbles will be found the solution of the Irish question..... The solution is quite simple. All they have got to do is to take back their French and their Shortt and their soldiers and their police and their judges and all the paraphernalia of their law and get bag and baggage out of Ireland and leave Ireland to the people for whom God Almighty made it.

"The last act of the drama of reducing Ireland to slavery was proposed a few weeks ago, and they were in the hurry of their lives in passing it through and putting it on the Statute Book. It seems to me from our experience in Ireland of their Home Rule Bill of four years ago, and their Conscription Act of some four or five weeks ago that if you want to get rid of a nuisance the best way to treat it is to put it on the Statute Book. They rushed it pell-mell through the House of Commons and they sat up nights in the House of Lords, and they had the Commissioners and King George waiting in their robes until the House of Lords had passed it through in order to put the King's signature upon it; and one would imagine that it was going to be in full force the next day. All the time they were wondering whether it would be met by passive resistance or active resistance. Well, my friends, we are quite prepared to meet it with passive resistance as long as it remains passive conscription. (Cheers).

"..... My friends, thank God, there is one Nation in Europe that has got leaders who are not sitting safely at home but who are encountering as

much danger as the rank and file of their followers. Eamonn De Valera and Arthur Griffith are not sitting safely in some office, protected by the lives of millions and gambling in other people's lives, but they are making their own. Eamonn De Valera two years ago was saved - oh! I believe it was a miracle of God! - to be the leader of the Irish race. We therefore have leaders who sympathise with the people, men who will not risk the life of any man unless it be absolutely necessary in the cause of Irish liberty. We have men who have not translated the world into terms of machine guns, poison gas and high explosives, but who still believe that the world was made for those living in it..... Ah!, yes, they can drown our voices. They can prevent De Valera from coming here to speak to the people of Cavan for some time longer anyway. They can stifle the voice of Arthur Griffith and compel some other pen in Ireland to write articles in "Nationality". But, men of Cavan, they won't be able to stifle the united voices of the writers of Cavan. That will be one flashlight that will shine up in the sky over Ireland and that will be seen by the Irish in America and Australia and in every part of the world. Therefore you have got an opportunity such as seldom comes to any constituency in Ireland. We got it in North Roscommon a year and a quarter ago..... and I tell you we were threatened with bitter things in those days. If we voted for Count Plunkett we were told that we would bring turmoil and bloodshed on the country. We were told that conscription would be put into force immediately, that we would vex John Bull and that if we vexed John Bull that he was an awful fellow, and what would he not do with us.

Aye, and we were told that by those members of the Parliament who are coming down here feeding you up with lies and we are here today amongst a people who in a few days more when this election will come on will send in trumpet tones throughout the world the same demand for Ireland's complete independence that has come already from Roscommon and Clare, Longford, Kilkenny and Tullamore, and, please God, I hope there will not be found in Cavan any man selfish, any man stupid enough not to see that the strength of Ireland's case against conscription rests upon the fact that Ireland is a Nation and that it is only as a Nation that we can refuse conscription.

It is only because we are a nationality that our young men can go forth, with a clear conscience, look up into the face of Almighty God and say that they are prepared, if necessary, to shed the last drop of their blood upon the Irish soil rather than be swept away to be the bond slaves of the Imperial plotters.

They talk of their plots, but they are the plotters. Ireland is a Nation. They are criminals to come to Ireland at all. Their Lords Lieutenant and their Chief Secretaries are criminals against humanity by daring to come in and try by force to run a country against the will of the people who are governed as a Nation, and only as a Nation, are we right in resisting conscription, and as a Nation we cannot have any parleying any longer with any foreign Parliament.

We must turn our back upon Westminster and proclaim our right before the whole world..... Is it going to do it by voting for this man O'Hanlon, or is it going to do it by voting for that Irishman who, for the last thirty years has been planning and writing and labouring in obscurity and in voluntary poverty in

Dublin to save country? But, thank God, at last when the soil was enriched by the blood of the men of Easter Week, his crop burst forth and filled Ireland from end to end with its present golden harvest.

"Now I will tell you one thing about Arthur Griffith. At the time when the North Roscommon Election was coming along, last January twelve months, we had no organisation in the country. That was several months before the present Sinn Féin organisation was formed. There was no branch of that organisation to take up the fight anywhere and we had no money to run it with - not one red cent of this German gold that is pouring over Ireland these years past (laughter) was available at the time of the Roscommon election, and as a matter of fact it was only the other day that I succeeded in paying back the last of the money for the Roscommon election. Even since I was not able to pick up any of the German gold (laughter). Arthur Griffith had come out of prison or internment about two or three weeks before the North Roscommon Election came on and a number of friends of his got together and subscribed £150 to re-start "Nationality". As soon as James O'Kelly, the member for North Roscommon, died, Arthur Griffith came to a friend of mine and he said: "Here I have this £150 to re-start "Nationality" and you can have it for the North Roscommon Election". Well, thank God, we were able to get along without it because we got two other men to give us £200 apiece, and we left Arthur Griffith his £150, and so he was able to put "Nationality" on foot again, and we had the first copy of it out to celebrate the victory of North Roscommon. (Cheers).

And, I might tell you for the last five or six months I have had a number of young people from Crossna giving plays up and down the country in order to make up the last £400 which was paid last week. I have given you just a little picture of the truth about Sinn Féin, the truth about the motives and the principles of our organisation and what is more important for you, men of Cavan, a little of the truth about the real Arthur Griffith."

The story of the German Plot and of Sinn Féiners being in receipt of German gold was a bit fantastic. It was even too poor as an election dodge, although sad to relate the Irish Parliamentary Party clung on to that form of propaganda, had even been using for a considerable time back the bogey that Sinn Féiners were pro-Germans. One found it hard to believe that the Castle Authorities inventing a discovery of such descriptions for the mere purpose of permitting the Irish Party to win the Election. But the fact emerged that their swoop on the republican leaders and election staff had the effect, to some great extent, of upsetting the election machinery, thus giving the Parliamentary Party lee-way, and that at a time when the election was at its highest pitch and tempo. Were it not for Father O'Flanagan, who stepped into the breach and spent himself in the election fray, irretrievable harm might have been done the Republican cause. Other men, too, came to the rescue, including very many Volunteer Officers and men. This German Plot canard had a notable effect on republican adherents in East Cavan and sent many men into the arms of the Volunteers and women into the ranks of Cumann na mBan and caused many Sinn Féin clubs to be formed in the county.

Most people, especially Republicans, saw in this move by the British Government, evidence of the stage being prepared for conscription. Many other phases of British military policy, which many held to be dovetailed into the framework of conscription, were in evidence: Raiding of premises used as Volunteer drill halls or lecture rooms, raids on Volunteer drill parties in the open. In Dublin one such raid had taken place around March of that year on a Volunteer engineering class held at 28 North Frederick Street, when 28 men were arrested, among whom was one of our Company, Mick Howlett. These arrests caused a serious setback to the Dublin Brigade, but only for a short time, as it opened the way for a more perfect and permanent unit, the formation of what was to be known as the 5th (Engineer) Battalion. This unit was formed from selected men from various Companies, our own ("C") Company supplying Tom O'Reilly, Seán O'Connor, Mick Derham, Ned Kelly and John Cusack. Heretofore the Engineering Unit or Engineering Class had not the status of a separate or distinct entity, the members attending same retaining their association with their own particular Companies. But at the formation of the 5th Battalion men were regularly transferred from their former Companies and became recognised members of the 5th. Instead the matter was so urgent and important that men had to be furnished to the new unit, in some instances forceful persuasion had to be applied or expressed to obtain compliance with the order.

Of the men arrested on that occasion the "Irish Independent" of 23rd February, 1918, reported :-

"Independent", 23 February, 1918.

"28 Bench Warrants issued.

Twenty-seven of the men who had been arrested in premises in North Frederick Street failed to appear in the Metropolitan Police Courts to answer to the charges - and Mr. Drury, on the application of Mr. Devitt for the Crown granted a warrant for their arrest. A warrant was also issued for the arrest of Mr. O'Connor, who though arrested on the occasion of the raid and charged at Mountjoy Prison, has not been summoned."

These men, after some time were re-arrested and sentenced. During the period of their imprisonment they engaged with other Volunteer prisoners in a hunger strike.

Victory for Hunger-Strikers: "Irishman", 9th March, 1918.

"Despite Mr. Duke's announcement that Irish political prisoners, who went on hunger-strike, would not be forcibly fed, and would not be released citizens Hickey and McCarthy were last week released from Cork Prison."

"Citizen J. J. Joy, "Irishman", 9th March, 1918, states, who endured a week in Tralee Jail rather than pay a fine of 1/- for collecting for the Thomas Ashe Memorial Fund without a permit, got on his return an enthusiastic reception at Listowel from the Volunteers of Dingle."

"Citizen J. McMahon, Mullingar, who had been sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment and was subsequently released on hunger-strike, was accorded a most cordial welcome on reaching Mullingar."

Mountjoy Prisoners: "Irishman", 9th March, 1918.

"It was reported on Monday morning that several of the republican prisoners in Mountjoy were in a serious condition. Two of them still refuse food and are in a very weak condition."

"Dundalk Prisoners: "Irishman", 9th March, 1918.

"The three hunger-strikers in Dundalk Prison are in a very weak state and are at present in Prison Hospital. On Saturday night the Dundalk Volunteers marched to the prison and afterwards to the Market Square where a meeting was held. Over 4,000 people were present and were addressed by citizen Hughes, Chairman U. D. C., and Captain F. Thornton."

"Recently ("Nationality", March 9th, 1918), "the authorities in Ireland got a couple of ordinary criminals to go on hunger-strike and released one of them. The idea was to confuse the minds of people as to the object and moral justification of hunger-striking. The hunger-strike was entered upon to compel political prisoners to receive political prisoners' treatment instead of being treated as criminals. After the death of Thomas Ashe the English Government through the Lord Mayor of Dublin agreed to accord the treatment of political prisoners to Irish political prisoners. The Government has as usual broken its agreement and attempted to restore the old conditions - hence the hunger-strike. It must be clearly understood both in Ireland and outside that the reason why Irishmen are dying of hunger-strike in prison is because six months after entering into the Mountjoy agreement the English Government has broken it".

On the 15th June the British Authorities declared 14 counties prohibited areas.

Obviously the military mind was at work with every tendency to over-awe the Volunteers and to overcome resistance to conscription. Daily and weekly raiding and arrests mounted up. Undeterred by these activities and their attendant dangers the Irish Volunteers pursued their normal routine of parading, training and arming. Great care had to be taken to provide protection for the units when parading in halls or in open country: vigilance, protection and efficiency were the three most essential requirements at that time. We could not afford to relax our endeavours or slacken our work in any way. To do so would have been tragic and harmful for the movement generally and might have led the British military mind to conclude that we were showing signs of weakening in sight of impending dangers and trials. In consequence of increasing raids by large forces of police, assisted at times by the British military, a new force was established in our Battalion, the forming of a Battalion Cyclists' Corps. This corps was recruited from the several Companies forming the Battalion, the members so serving unlike those initiated into the 5th Battalion, retaining their membership of their Company units. The purpose of the Cyclist Corps was to render protection to Battalion, to perform despatch work and engage in specialised cyclist training. Individual members of that unit were allotted to special tasks, such as orderlies and special despatch carriers: Two members of our Company, Charlie O'Hanlon and Frank Weafer being assigned the task of delivering messages from our G.H.Q. to Maynooth, Celbridge, etc. once or twice weekly.

During all this period, indeed at all times since the inception of the Volunteers, despite the silly talk and innuendoes that the Republican movement was being supported by "German gold", our men had to pay their threepence per week contribution and also subscribe towards an arms fund according to their means and their inclination, even when no hope could be held out, or no sign or prospect of their receiving such arms or equipment. This was always a big problem, nay a sad and major problem for Company officers who were always at their wits end to arm and equip the men under their charge. It was not one that could be settled in any specified manner if it could be settled at all, for we were only a voluntary force with no regular military establishment or arsenal from which to draw our supplies. We had to be content with the small and very meagre amount of arms and materials that came our way by adventure raids or purchase. Many of our men cheerfully and hopefully subscribed over and above the value of the war materials supplied them; some even could not be supplied at all and had to be content to wait for some "turning up later on". Thus our Volunteers were paying their way in Ireland's cause, which payment carried with it the task of liberating Ireland, and in so doing taking all the risks and bearing many hardships in what was then, according to the British Authorities an illegal organisation engaged in illegal drilling, etc. It was not even safe to be found in possession of a Volunteer Membership Card, to sing "rebelly" songs which had been declared illegal, with sad results for some who rendered vocal and tantalising expression to the art at concerts, many of which were then held in Dublin at least under Volunteer auspices, but not under Volunteer names. In this respect the various Athletic Club titles proved of enormous value as indeed

the holding of concerts at the time helped to keep the republican spirit alive, and brought much needed funds to Companies, as well as augmenting funds for dependants of our men in jail.

Concerning the Volunteers incarcerated in jails, it was reported on the 24th June that republican prisoners in Belfast Jail had revolted. This news awoke the Irish people to the seriousness of things within the confines of prison walls. It was but natural that we in the Dublin Brigade should feel anxious in view of the fact that some of the men revolting were members thereof. The bigger aspect, however, was that the prisoners felt called upon to take this action out of protest against the unsatisfactory nature of their incarceration.

Previous to this about the month of March, Ireland went wild when the news was flashed that a number of Volunteers escaped from an English prison. Arising out of this was the startling appearance of Seán McGarry at an assembly in the Mansion House at which some of us of the Dublin Brigade were engaged as stewards and guards. This was a feat of unusual daring. The detectives present at the hall showed signs of restiveness and the Volunteers had the task of affording protection to Seán when leaving the premises.

A new repressive measure was put into effect by the order, issued on the 10th July, proclaiming national organisations, meetings and hurling matches. This bold stroke was intended to kill the republican movement, and to deny the people their right to free assembly, free and open expression of opinion, to enjoy and amuse themselves in whatever way they chose. The purpose of prescribing

hurling matches resulted from the vicious and spiteful propaganda indulged in by the English Press, which depicted the Irish as being more concerned with looking after their forms of amusement instead of fighting for King and country. Not only that but it was hinted that the Irish were getting and taking life too easily, by disporting themselves through a medium that was neither Imperial nor warlike enough to suit the taste, and obtain the approval of their defamers. In the main the ukese of prohibition had as its principal object the curbing of too open association and contact between people of similar national tendencies and patriotic sentiment.

The only effect this proclamation had on the national organisations was to add to their prestige, to re-animate and to solidify them. This was so as far as the Volunteers were concerned. It put our men on their mettle, brought home to them the seriousness of the political situation and demonstrated that the British sought to clear the decks for imposing conscription. Their strength lay in the interests of Ireland in which they were bound in maintaining the Volunteers as a national force. Consequently the only answer Volunteers could give to this, as to previous proclamations, was to carry on. Hence the order was disobeyed, and the Irish Volunteers, redoubling their efforts, by intensive sustained training, became more vigilant if not more determined. Greater precautions had to be taken to protect gatherings of Volunteers by means of scouting and intelligence parties, tasks that had to be performed in all weathers and on various occasions, when units were engaged at drill, training or manoeuvres. No change occurred in the Volunteers that would give the impression that the movement was dead, rather the opposite. The same could be said of Sinn Féin, which continued

functioning despite the proclamation, backed by its many Volunteer members and high Volunteer personages on its Councils, constituency and branch Committees.

A day came when, in defiance of the aforesaid British proclamation, 1,400 hurling matches were played throughout Ireland. This was on the 4th August. The Irish Volunteers were in demand on that day, performing guard duty at various venues, the Dublin Brigade rendering service in that connection. Similarly Sinn Féin on the 15th August held open-air meetings in every parish in Ireland in defiance of the proclamation. Irish Volunteer protection was again afforded. In this respect our Company performed guard duty for a meeting held at Little Denmark Street, and though a few police were present on the occasion no effort was made to enforce the British law.

One of the most startling and perhaps humorous incidents of the year occurred in Dublin with the seizure of a large number of pigs at North Circular Road. This consignment was being driven to the North Wall for shipment to England. On the order of Diarmuid Lynch, Sinn Féin Food Director, a party of Volunteers of the Dublin Brigade effected the capture, and drove the pigs to a dairy yard situated at the end of Lower Sherrard Street, where they were killed by Volunteers skilled in the art of pork butchering. This was a big task which took several hours to complete, under the protection of units of the Volunteers, our own Company being well represented. When the "fell" work of butchering was accomplished, the poor victims were despatched to a certain bacon curer, amid scenes of great enthusiasm and animation.

The English Press raged and howled at the Sinn Féin Director in whose name the seizure was made against the

Volunteers who executed the order, and against the British authorities for permitting such a thing to happen. Owing to the adverse economic plight of Ireland at the time when, if Ireland's manhood was not supplying cannon fodder in the war, the British authorities were extracting more than their share of Irish livestock and produce, there arose a cry from many parts of Ireland for land to till, land settlement and land distribution. Sinn Féin as the popular and national movement gave its support to this agitation, if not in its entirety in so far as it was feasible and equitable. As a national movement it claimed that we should have in Ireland enough food to sustain and maintain a larger population. Land was plentiful; most of its produce at the time was being exported to England, in consequence of which the native population had to subsist on a meagre ration. Here was a strange economy! It bred agrarian and political unrest, creating a situation in which Sinn Féin set up machinery to give effect to the demands made on it by substituting a land code and food controlling policy for the country.

During the summer months many units of the Dublin Brigade encamped in different parts of the county. Our own Company conducted a camp at Ticknock on the Dublin Mountains. By this means we were enabled to carry out certain forms of training. The R. I. C. from Dundrum paid us a few visits apparently anxious to ascertain if our camp was being run for or we engaged in unlawful pursuits. But such vigilance or interests on their part failed to catch us napping; in their presence we were so law-abiding and docile, hardly the kind of people that would do any harm to the powers that be, and whose only care was to have a good time. So bluff won the day!

The Annual Convention of the Irish Volunteers was held in the Columcille Hall in the month of October, 1918. The greatest secrecy had to be observed concerning this assembly, and special precautions taken to afford ample protection at the hall and immediate neighbourhood. Police barracks and military barracks in the vicinity were under the surveillance of picked men, our Battalion furnishing quite a number of these.

Seán Ellis, who had been a loyal member of our Company, died on the 7th November. He had served in the Four Courts during Easter Week Rising and was interned in Frongoch. A cabinet-maker by trade, he carried on business with his brother Samuel, who was a 2nd Battalion man and had also served in the Rising. Seán was a great favourite with the members of "C" Company. His funeral was a very representative one, the Company rendering military honours. Another death, that of Volunteer Gleeson, which took place at the Mater Hospital, was recorded. Volunteer Gleeson was attached to the 2nd Battalion. At the removal of his remains to Fairview Church and funeral the next day, the Dublin Brigade paid him fitting honours.

By some strange working of fate, these sad deaths caused the Volunteers to come into public view, thus emphasising that despite all ordinances and proclamations against them, the movement still lived. Another such death was to still further give proof of this. That was the death and funeral of Dick Coleman. His sad death in Usk Prison, England, brought home to the Irish people the sorrows and trials of the "felons of our land". The Dublin Brigade took charge of his remains on its arrival in Dublin, and the funeral from Westland Row Church.

That funeral was as impressive and representative as that of Thomas Ashe fourteen months before, rendering full military honours, and supplying a firing party for the occasion. This military exhibition on the part of the Volunteers, the attendance of numerous bands and other illegal associations, was a direct affront to the British authorities and even was risky for all especially the Volunteers. The rifles for the occasion had to be transferred secretly the night before by Volunteers, some of our Company being engaged in this work and on the firing party. As in the case of the funeral of Thomas Ashe, the previous year, our (1st) Battalion were on duty at Glasnevin Cemetery.

"The Catholic Bulletin" of the time furnished the following particulars of the life of Richard Coleman.

He was born in Swords, Co. Dublin, in the year 1890, and comes of an old Co. Dublin family. Many of his relatives have been identified with the teaching profession, his father, lately deceased, having been teacher at the Swords School, and his grandfather and grandmother on the maternal side, were also teachers in the Swords parish. He was educated at Swords School and afterwards at the Christian Brothers Schools, North Richmond Street, Dublin. Always of a devout disposition he early aspired to a religious life, and for a time directed his studies to that sphere; eventually, however, competing for and obtaining an appointment on the Midland Railway at Cavan. His desire for the religious life having again asserted itself, he entered the Novitiate of the Christian Brothers at Baldoyle, subsequently joining the Christian Brothers College at Marino, but finally returning to civil life.

He joined the Volunteer Movement at its inception in Dublin and founded the first volunteer body, established in Fingal the Swords Company of which he was Captain, as well as being Adjutant of the 5th Fingal Battalion. His activities as a Volunteer organiser in the surrounding districts attracted the attention of the special correspondent of the "Daily Mail."

With the Fingal Volunteers he took part in the Howth gun-running. Commandant P.H. Pearse wrote him a warm letter of congratulation on his handling of the men under his charge at manoeuvres held previous to Easter Week, 1916. At the Rising he mobilised the Swords Company, and joined Commandant Thomas Ashe, volunteering later, in response to a request for assistance from Commandant Connolly to lead a number of men to Dublin. On reaching the G.P.O. he was entrusted with the command of a section to attempt the relief of the Mendicity Institute. As they set out, Commandant Connolly remarked: "You will hardly get there, but try your best". After a most venturesome experience under intense fire from rifle and machine guns, they reached the rear of the Mendicity to find the entrance covered by rifle fire. By dashing one by one at the word of command, the whole party got in without mishap. Soon the Mendicity was surrounded by overwhelming forces, and the garrison eventually had no option but to surrender. Richard Coleman was duly condemned to death, his sentence being commuted to three years' penal servitude. He was with Heuston and Major MacBride at their last moments.

He was imprisoned at Dartmoor and Lewes, being released under the general amnesty; took part in the Clare Election. After his release he was sentenced to

six months' imprisonment for drilling at Kilbane; was on hunger strike at Mountjoy when Thomas Ashe met his death, and in the subsequent hunger strike at Dundalk. His health, impaired by these terms of imprisonment, was only partially restored when he was again arrested at the general round-up in May 1918, in the alleged German Plot. He was imprisoned at Usk, his fifteenth prison, where he died of pneumonia following influenza.

The cessation of hostilities of the European War heralded by the Armistice of November 11th, 1918, found Ireland still struggling for independence for the right to self-determination. That night and a couple of nights afterwards, the pro-British element gave vent to their feelings and Dublin witnessed unusual and disorderly scenes. War-minded individuals of both sexes tore through the principal thoroughfares, sporting their war colours, and literally painted the town red. This was the first jingo exhibition during the war. The occasion might have been relegated to the limbo of things, were it not that advantage was taken to demonstrate hostility towards republicans and the republican cause. Numerous attacks were made on individual republicans by groups of warrior Union Jackers: even ordinary citizens, for no other "crime" but that they didn't sport the British colours were attacked on the streets. These demonstrations begot counter demonstrations and before the night of the 11th was spent Dublin was a city of free fights, baton charges and general turmoil. The Trinity boys came into prominence on the British side, and many a young man of military age who had bravely sheltered behind the walls of that Imperial dynasty, beribboned himself in loyal colours and showed loyal blood in their efforts to prove their loyalty to "King and Country". Then came the "Nationals"

on the scene, marching and counter-marching and singing Irish songs. There were many "bold" scenes as the two rival college groups came into collision.

Obviously the pro-British section of the population was in the mood to show strength and vigour in demonstrating a la mode the Imperial victory. The wild 'uns of the female species, those who were classed as recipients of "the funny money" so lavishly provided by the British to the dependants of men serving in their forces, were particularly vociferous and provoking on that night, and staged many a scene that was neither edifying nor pleasant. There were times when they outstretched themselves in the attempt to molest and belabour people of republican sympathies. News travels fast in Dublin and responding to the stories that were put into circulation, groups of Volunteers made the streets of Dublin their rendezvous in order to afford protection to republicans set upon by the mobs.

On the next night the riotous scenes were re-enacted. Peace in Europe brought rioting to Dublin, and ^{gave/} hooligans and police fall scope for their several acts to produce results in keeping with their impressive tendencies. In many instances the police scored victories, but not always at the expense of the loyal demonstrator, many of whom were too slick to fall victims of police batoning. One noticeable aspect of these demonstrations, one which republicans could not fail to observe, was engendered by the feeling that that the pro-British element made the occasion one to show their teeth as well as giving expression to their existence and strength, to such an extent as to convey the impression that they were the only people that mattered. Honour, where honour is due, it must be recorded that all those people who had found themselves on England's side in that war, paraded in the

fashion as described for the mere sake of flaunting their colours on the face of, or showing hostility to, republicans as such. There were cases of people who had been in receipt of war money, who were well disposed towards the Volunteers and Republican Movement. There were even families that had given a father, husband, son or brother to fight on England's side, were friends of the republican cause. Indeed many other families had one or more of their menfolk in both the Volunteers and the British forces. In some instances Irishmen had been entrapped to join up by vapouring of clever politicians and the wily propaganda, or due to compulsion by astute employers or economic pressure. These but emphasised the point of a house divided against itself - politically divided because of the mixed variety of soldiering spirit inoculated into the realm of household bliss, in which belligerency or belligerent neutrality played a part in an issue of an Irish problem, an Irish question.

To the most casual observer Dublin on the occasion of the signing of the Armistice, 11 November, 1918, was gone all English. Dublin then was en fete, beflagged and decorated without any regard to labour or expense. There were very few business premises, institutions or houses in the centre of the city that had not its Union Jack, or other British flag, some more than one, bunting or other forms of decoration. In other parts of the city and suburbs the display was hardly less pronounced, even to the extent of putting "Ireland's immortal green" in the background, or if anything in the nature of an "Irish flag" was displayed any old type filled the gap, the green flag with the harp, with the crown predominating. Such an exhibition of flunkeyism and loyalty exasperated republicans especially in view of the

efforts being made to destroy the soul and spirit of the Irish Nation to be free, for beneath the surface of the celebration of the Armistice there lived a movement that was seeking to put to the test the war policies of those who claimed that that world war was being fought for the rights of self determination for small nations. Alas the unwary, the unenlightened might perceive that the ending of this world catastrophe, with its glorious victories and celebrations, were to learn something yet about the Irish situation that would afford them food for reflection.

That point was reached when near the end of December of that year Sinn Féin won a complete victory at the polls, when 73 republicans were elected, thus eclipsing the Irish Parliamentary Party. The Irish Volunteers, both as individuals and as a body, threw themselves wholeheartedly into that contest by canvassing, by performing clerical work, acting as election agents, providing drivers for cars, and in protecting meetings. Most of the Sinn Féin candidates were Irish Volunteers and 1916 men. The victory was all the more marked because it was regarded as a "khaki election", in which soldiers were permitted to vote. Here was a peculiar situation. The elected representatives were pledged not to sit in the British House of Commons, which was up to then the normal course, providing thereby the basis of the union between Ireland and England. By this means they refused to subscribe to the Oath of Allegiance to his Britannic Majesty, his heirs and successors, and by reason of this refused to accept payment of £400 per year which stipend was allocated to members of Parliament.

"What will Sinn Féin do now?", was being asked by many people, to which Sinn Féin replied: "We will stay at home in Ireland, and abstaining from the British

Parliament will set up a constituent assembly in Ireland to look after Irish interests". Thus it came to pass that the elected representatives of Ireland met at the Mansion House on January 9th, 1919, and brought into being Dáil Éireann - the Parliament of Ireland.

The dreams which adherents of the Sinn Féin policy had dreamed pre-1916 had become a reality. It was "a wild fantastic dream" that had been laughed to scorn by the wiseacres - the "practical" politicians, the know-alls and wonder-workers, as an experiment that had nothing to commend itself as a parliamentary assembly. The tantalising part of the dream was that these "wild men" in Sinn Féin, these same men whom the "practical" politicians had for so long stigmatised as disciples of red "ruin and rebellion" clung to the idea that the institution of such an assembly was feasible and proper under the circumstances then prevailing.

On that January day Sinn Féin or to be more precise republican parliamentary representatives, victors in the recent election backed up by the Irish Volunteers set their seal to the institution of a Parliament and gave moral and physical expression to the ideal of self-determination, the rule of law which in the words of the immortal Lincoln meant Government by the people, for the people, and in the interest of the people. It was an experiment that had been tried with success in Hungary, this idea of withdrawing our parliamentary members from attendance at a foreign assembly. The start was made in Ireland: the only question was, would it succeed?

All eyes were turned on this first meeting. The gentlemen of the Press were there in large numbers. Men and women from every part of Ireland were present in

such numbers as to pack the Mansion House and to leave a large overflow in the streets outside. Fortunately admission was limited to ticket holders, otherwise the place would have been unreasonably packed, for many of those people outside had certain claims to be provided entry. Even the British authorities were conspicuously present, outside, in the physical form of police special detectives and soldiers in full war-paint. The presence of the latter was considered by many as a sign that the law was to be invoked to the detriment of an illegal assembly - in other words, that steps would be taken to prevent its functioning. Such did not happen, however, and they had perforce to while the time away listening to the rebelling songs of the people outside.

In the order of things, the Irish Volunteers which consisted of a large force of selected men of the Dublin Brigade, performed duties within and without the building as stewards, guards, etc. For the space of several hours we remained on duty and when the business of the day was concluded some of these men were assigned to various tasks, some of which related to getting important men safely away and protecting them to their places of residences, not necessarily their homes as some of them because of the heavy hand of the law had not lived "at home" for quite a time. This precaution was especially taken to protect high-ranking Volunteers, who by reason of their new fame as parliamentary representatives, exposed themselves to arrest by the British. So came into being Dáil Éireann - Ireland's Parliamentary Assembly - with its "Declaration of Irish Independence", its message to the Free Nations of the World, and its Democratic Policy".

As an event of political and national importance this inauguration of an Irish Parliament struck a note of

defiance to and disregard of English rule. In the military sphere the Irish Volunteers had taken, and proposed taking, strong aggressive action in pursuit of a policy to secure armaments and military equipment. By means of an intelligence system in which every man co-operated, likely places where arms or war material were stored, became suspect with the result that raids for arms were made on houses, institutions, etc. on the orders of the I. R. A. Every Company carried out its quota of such raids, ours ("C") being no exception to the rule. In many instances these raids were made in order to prevent the weapons being delivered up to the British authorities. Sometimes the matter resolved itself into a question of which would get there first - the first on the scene was generally the victor. By such raids many additions were made to the arms' hoards, and alas! not infrequently, these additions were only suitable for the scrap heap or for exhibiting in a museum! as souvenirs of a very remote past. But such were the uncertainties of time and place and circumstance in relation to which the Irish Volunteers were then seeking to become an armed force under great difficulties and stress.

This matter of raiding for arms occasioned the exercise of extraordinary measures by the Volunteers, thus bringing them in close contact with the police and military authorities. One of these was the raid for explosives at Solohead, Co. Tipperary. This extraordinary and sensational event created difficulties for the newly established Dáil Éireann. The question uppermost in the minds of the Volunteers was: "Would the Dáil consent to these acts?" Even a greater matter that required immediate elucidation was the relation of the Dáil to the Irish Volunteers.

One of the first acts of the Dáil was to take responsibility for the activities of the Irish Volunteers. In doing this full recognition was accorded to the Volunteers as the army of Ireland. This was followed by the declaration that an oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann as the lawful government was and is hereby subscribed by each serving and future member of the army of the Republic, bearing true faith and allegiance to Dáil Éireann as by law established "without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion". Thus, the official sanction of the title the Irish Republican Army! and the discarding of its former title Irish Volunteers. This action by the Government of Dáil Éireann presupposed ready and willing obedience by all men of the former Irish Volunteers. There were instances, however, where the taking of the oath caused the possible severance of good trustworthy men from the Volunteers. At first it had a mixed reception. Some men required explicit understanding of the actual relations between Dáil Éireann. One big point that seemed to puzzle not a few was that which seemed to suggest that Dáil Éireann or the Government of Dáil Éireann was taking over our Volunteer Force; according to the oath we automatically became subservient to such a government, and by so doing parted with the freedom and control of the Volunteers from its original source; that if Dáil Éireann went wrong politically or nationally the I.R.A. as a military force would follow suit.

This was strange arguing for Volunteers - the rank and file especially being the severest critics of the change of authority and control. They had reasons to argue thus. Heretofore the Volunteers were governed by a Volunteer Executive, elected at annual conventions.

Would this procedure be followed if Dáil Éireann exercised authority? The big contention was that the said government of Dáil Éireann might not be so solid on the question of the ideal of complete independence, the establishment of the Irish Republic. Where would the Army of the Republic stand in such an eventuality?

In the end the Irish Volunteers agreed to the new order of things and from that moment we became sworn members of the I.R.A. under the authority of Dáil Éireann, with an established status as a fighting force, a consideration of supreme and vital importance at a time when strenuous efforts were being made to come to handgrips with the British authorities and vice versa when they were doing their utmost to destroy the Republican Movement. Of course, neither the imposition of the oath, nor even the coming into being of the Dáil were of themselves causes for the intensification of militant activity on the part of the republican forces. Already these were under way and were becoming widespread in one form or other throughout the country. But when the Dáil placed their seal of assent to the warfare being waged by the I.R.A. the full signification of the war for Independence became manifest. From that time, if not before, we in the I.R.A. had no doubt as to the part we should have to play in the struggle; in like manner the British Government realised that the task of ruling Ireland would only be achieved by force, and force alone.

It was not surprising then, that in the course of time, the main topic of news featuring Irish life was centred around militant activities of both the I.R.A. and the British forces. The British Government did not relax any of the wartime regulations in relation to illegal organisations, illegal assemblies, drilling, arming, and

sedition speeches, etc. Every time the Volunteers attended parades, every time they paid their subscription or subscribed towards an arms' fund, every time they drilled, or were being drilled, armed or trained or marched or manoeuvred, they were guilty of an offence against the law. Every time they spoke of, acted in, condoned or encouraged the alleged military force to wit the I.R.A., they were commissioning crime and merited punishment. Hence the full rigours of the law were applied to stamp out "poisonous insects", to destroy the forces of anarchy and sedition. To achieve these ends widespread raids were carried out by the Crown forces on private dwellings, public halls and I.R.A. training centres or rendezvous, raids for arms, raids to effect arrest of members of the I.R.A., raids for many reasons and on many pretexts. Nothing daunted the I.R.A. continued its work, training, arming, carrying out manoeuvres, raiding for arms, for equipment and military stores, and greater audacity than all made an appeal to the citizens for the Arms' Fund, collecting money from door to door in at least the city of Dublin. Even the I.R.A. planned and carried out escapes from jail. While on this subject it might be well to refer to the sensational escape of Barney Mellows, Joe McGrath and two others from Usk in January, that of President De Valera, Seán McGarry and Seán Milroy from Lincoln Jail in March, 1919.

An event of no little political importance was planned co-incident on the escape of President De Valera. That was the project to present him with the keys of the city of Dublin on behalf of the Dublin Municipal Authorities. This token presentation was to be made at Mount Street, where he was to be welcomed and conducted ceremoniously to the city. Elaborate plans were made for the occasion. The Dublin Brigade were especially mobilised for the occasion.

Everything went well until a certain moment when the British Government, through its agency Dublin Castle, issued a proclamation forbidding the function in the interest of public order and safety. The question many members of the I.R.A. pondered was, "Would the proclamation be defied and in what way?". For answer, the arrangements were cancelled and the I.R.A. demobilised. That eleventh hour cancellation was looked upon by many members of the Dublin Brigade as a "climb down" and many of our republican supporters felt the humiliation of the whole affair. One thing stood out very clearly, however, and that was the prepondering strength of the British forces as they took possession of the locality and fully prepared for every eventuality.

The British Government reacted to the new "Irish situation" occasioned by the establishment of Dáil Eireann by the appointment of a new Chief Secretary for Ireland in the person of the Right Hon. Ian MacPherson on January 20, 1919, an appointment that signified more and intense repressive measures to govern Ireland. Raids, arrests by Crown forces followed in rapid succession. The I.R.A. taking up the challenge brought a new weapon into play; on the 28, I.R.A. prisoners for the first time refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the English Courts to try them. From that moment the I.R.A. authorities specifically ordered all ranks to adopt a similar attitude in future trials. From that moment members of the I.R.A. at their trial used the form "as a soldier of the Irish Republic I refuse to recognise the jurisdiction of this court". Similarly civilian supporters of the republican cause used the form "as a citizen of the Irish Republic I refuse to recognise this court". Thus was coined a new phrase to devote factual and resolute opposition to British rule.

Ireland's fight for self-determination did not go unheeded for in the United States, in Australia and in England, wherever Irish people were, an agitation had sprung up, indeed had been maintained since 1916, to support the Irish cause. The Irish in America were particularly alive and active. Arising out of their activity an American delegation consisting of Messrs. Frank P. Walsh, Edward T. Dunne and Michael J. Ryan, visited Ireland on May 2nd, on their way to the Peace Conference at Paris. Their visit to Dublin was the occasion of a huge demonstration amid scenes of great and tumultuous enthusiasm, the I.R.A. sharing with Dublin citizens in paying them honour. During their stay in Dublin they attended a Dáil session as privileged guests. Apropos of their visit it was said at the time that Mr. Lloyd George found them "very high-class men" and even facilitated their journey to Ireland, but nevertheless their visit was condemned by the bitter anti-Irish political element in England and among their brethren in Dublin Castle. Then, on the 26th May, Ireland reacted by sending her case for Independence to the Peace Conference. To further emphasise the Irish demand for Independence the American Senate on the 6th June requested American Peace Delegation at Versailles to secure a hearing for Irish representatives. By this means our national leaders sought to make Ireland's demands an international rather than a domestic issue.

On the 21st May, Mr. J.J. Walsh and 30 other Republicans escaped from Mountjoy Jail, engineered by I.R.A. outside, whose skill and initiative were thus clearly demonstrated. A new impetus to the republican cause was the launching by Dáil Éireann of a National Loan.

The I. R. A. rendered every assistance to promoting the sale of these bonds, individual members subscribing towards it. In this connection reference must be made to the fact that that loan was subscribed in full, even our people in the United States viewing with us in Ireland to make it a huge success. The British looked none too kindly on that transaction. In a raid made by British forces on Sinn Féin Headquarters, 6 Harcourt Street, Dublin, monies that had been deposited on behalf of bond subscribers, in the case of the Sinn Féin Bank, which had premises there, were seized. An instance of that seizure affected the bond holders attached to the O'Flanagan Sinn Féin Club. A sum, a hundred pounds or more, had been collected from members and sympathisers, in weekly instalments. That was a very fair amount for a group of people who did not possess an abundance of wealth. Those of us whose main task it was to direct and supervise that Club collection knew what sacrifices many members made to subscribe to the loan. Special praise must be accorded to Mr. Thomas Hoban, the Cumann Treasurer, whose indefatigable labours in that regard helped to make that collection the success it was.

Then came news that De Valera was in the United States conducting a campaign for American support of the Irish cause. News too of sensational occurrence in Dublin: the shooting of detectives in Dublin. On the 13th August, Dáil Éireann called on public bodies to sever connection with British administration. On the 10th September the British Government retaliated by suppressing Dáil Éireann. On the 6th October, republican prisoners revolted in Mountjoy Jail, followed on the 16th by a hunger-strike, and two days later a general release from the same jail. On the 29th nineteen newspapers were suppressed and the same day large numbers of arrests in

Ireland: 11th November, Dáil members arrested at 76 Harcourt Street: on the 26th, Sinn Féin proclaimed by the British Government and on the 15th December the "Freeman's Journal" was suppressed.

These were all front line news for recording the progress of events in the Ireland of 1919. But the year was not to pass out without one further sensational occurrence to the list. That was the attack on Lord French at Ashtown, Co. Dublin, on the 19th or 20th December. By means of an ambush prepared and carried out by picked men of the I.R.A. it was sought to eliminate the head of British Government in Ireland. Fate, however, decreed otherwise - Lord French escaped death, but one of the best of the I.R.A. attacking force was killed. He was Martin Savage of the 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade. It was a bold and daring attack that came within an ace of being successful; its failure was due to misadventure. By a clever ruse Lord French travelled in a different car than the one which the attackers believed him to occupy. Unquestionably that attack shocked the administrators of British Government in Ireland. It proved to them that there were dangerous men in Ireland. Furthermore, it proved that the I.R.A. were in the field, prepared to fight for its existence, in the face of adversity, raids, arrests and repressive measures.

Chapter 15.

That year then was a particularly active year for the British and Irish forces. The events recorded above formed but a fraction of I.R.A. activity which never ceased. We of the Dublin Brigade had become accustomed to our work. They were of a mixed variety: every Company had its

share of activities just as every Company had similar duties to perform in such matters as training and administration and in affording protection to their men and materials at all times. There were occasions when additional work was placed to the care of Companies. Such happened in our case. Around this time the 1st Battalion Companies were given the task of providing protection to the Executive during regular meetings of that body held at Parnell Square. That duty was performed over a long period, the men being armed with revolvers and grenades for the purpose. It was deemed highly important work, each Company, including our own, of the 1st Battalion, being allotted certain positions in the neighbourhood of the meeting place. Another form of activity in which the Companies were engaged was street patrol duties. Each Company operated in its own Company area, carrying out intelligence and observation duties, watching and reporting the movement of British troops, combining this work with that of specialised scouting and communication. In the initial stages of this work small numbers of men were employed; after a while the entire Company was employed on the work, even at the expense of other forms of training, so important was it considered to be at the time. Many a Company meeting night was devoted to this work, the members working generally in pairs, being stretched out over a large area, and other men forming lines of communication between them and Company Headquarters for the purpose of carrying messages. After a short while the men became specialised in the work and learned and reported much valuable information of the activities of the British.

Our men, too, had become accustomed to the duties connected with affording protection to the Company during the course of parades and training in halls or in the county Dublin. By means of a screen spread around the place where Company or any portion of it was situated, these men, whether on foot, or using bicycles, were ever alert and painstaking and it is to their credit that we officers, were always well informed of every movement of British forces in the vicinity - nay could always feel a certain measure of safety by reason of having provided that form of protection.

It was during that year that the Dublin Brigade was showing signs of particular activity. A new unit sprang into being, which was to play a big part in forcing the pace in military operations. That unit, which consisted of selected men of various Companies, was under the command of Brigadier Dick McKee and Vice-Brigadier Peadar Clancy. Only men who were easily accessible and available for duty day or night were accepted. Our Company supplied its quota of men for that work. It was to be a fast moving and quick striking force, organised to perform duties of a special character, outside of ordinary Company routine or activities. Our service with that new force did not entail severance with our own respective units. Time and again we were mobilised for "special jobs", paraded and dismissed with the remark "the job has been called off". Were we not "the folorn hopes", a description that had been applied by one of the men because of our futile enterprises. But a time came for testing the mettle and nerves of the men composing the unit.

Plans had been prepared, and about a dozen of us were mobilised and ready to effect the rescue from

police custody of a prominent officer of the Dublin Brigade - Commandant Ted Kelly, O/C. the 4th Battalion. On the occasion in question Commandant Kelly was being tried at Green Street Courthouse. It was believed that after the trial he would be conveyed in the "Black Maria" in a horse-drawn caravan from the Courthouse via off Upper Dorset Street St. Mary's/Place to Mountjoy Prison. The plan aimed at holding up that "Black Maria" at what is known as the Black Church in St. Mary's Place; overpowering the police guards and effecting the rescue of Kelly. Another Manchester rescue! All the men detailed for the work were in position to carry out what appeared to be a simple laid plot. A few men were placed in a laneway that entered that thoroughfare where the Christian Brothers' Schools were situated. These men were in possession of a handcart on which were workmen's tools. The idea was to wheel, or set in motion that handcart just at the moment when the "Black Maria" would turn a double corner, create a diversion and so cause the police to slacken speed. Immediately a couple of us were to present revolvers at the driver and deal with the horses while the men who were with the handcart dealt with the policeman seated behind the "Maria" and extracting the keys from him, open the door and release Kelly. An alternative plan was to burst in the door by means of crowbars and hammers which were part of the handcart cargo. Other men were in position to carry out supplementary action.

A considerable period elapsed; we were all tense and anxious for the sight of our quarry. Would the "Black Maria" ever come? We tired of the long waiting, the delay, afraid our presence there for such a long time might create suspicion at various points around the church and in the vicinity. Others of our men were in

position as protecting force. The time lagged on. The trial should be over now the car must be on its way Why is it so slow in coming other days it would be earlier What could have happened ? Then the news came. "Ted has been brought another way - this time under a strong military escort". Luckily we heard that news in time before the "Black Maria" hove in sight. As it was it passed the spot where the attack was planned to take place, continued on its way, the cries of a few women prisoners being conveyed therein, seeming to mock us for our misadventure. The bearer of the message that put us wise to the clever ruse adopted by the British authorities was Tom O'Reilly who had been detailed for duty at the Court and to inform us when the "Black Maria" carrying Ted Kelly was on its journey. Some others who were present on duty that day were George Fitzgerald of "A" Company, the brothers Paddy and John Doyle, Dinny Holmes, Paddy Stringer, Peadar Meehan, etc. the latter three men who were members of "C" Coy.

Another occasion of a "forlorn hope" had relation to the projected hold-up of a party of R.I.C. at Harcourt Street Railway Station. The R.I.C. were conveying explosives to some part of the country. A group of us were mobilised one night at 144 Great Brunswick Street. Peadar Clancy detailed our orders which set out that, early next morning a number of our men with himself in charge, were to present themselves at the station, purchase tickets, individually, of course, and go to the platform. While this was going on a number of other I.R.A. men were to take up positions at the entrance to the railway, while a motor car was to be in readiness at Adelaide Road for the purpose of transporting the seized explosives to safety.

My task was to assist in affording protection to the motor car and prevent any possible police intruder raising an alarm. The main plan was to surprise the R.I.C. party and overpower them; as it was they were in larger numbers than was anticipated and distinctly on guard and quite vigilant. Peadar sizing up the position and realising the difficulties of carrying out the task in the absence of effecting surprise in view of the small number of men under him decided to abandon the enterprise.

There were other occasions when this special unit was called upon to carry out certain duties or activities, some of which proved to be "forlorn hopes", and others meeting with partial or complete success. While not anticipating events, the recording of which must follow in proper sequence, that unit was destined to play a very important part in the continuing activities under various dates and in different ways. Included in the group were, George Fitzgerald, Frank Bolster, Joe Dolan, Paddy and Seán Doyle, Billy Baxter, Dave Goulding of "H" Company, Jimmy Carrigan, Denis Holmes, Kevin Barry, Tommy Merrigan, Seán Brunswick, Bertie Ryan, Peadar Breslin, representatives of various Companies of the First Battalion. Many of these men were associated with a series of exploits, not the least of which were jail escapes, seizure of mails, raids for arms and munitions, under Brigadier McKee, Vice-Brigadier Clancy and Rory O'Connor.

During that year also the I.R.A. had been engaged in the manufacture of hand-grenades. Many workshops were secretly turning out bomb casings and their component brass and metal fittings. Other men were responsible for making striking sets, fixing fuses, and regulating the insertion of gelnite, which was the explosive material used in the grenades. A few of our Company members were engaged on

the work of filling or preparing these bombs - Dinny Holmes, Patrick Macken, John Farrell. These men worked in their own homes and at specified places; at least Holmes was full-time employed. So important was their work that they were not required to attend Company parades, although none of these men held rigidly to that as an excuse for non-attendance with the Company. As can be understood the work of grenade making by these men was known to the Company Officer and not always to all the Company Officers. Some of these men worked under the Battalion Quartermaster or/and the Director of Munitions. Through their untiring efforts and the painstaking work of the various staffs working in the several depots, a good supply of grenades had become available. Several processes in the manufacture of these grenades had to be tried out before success was attained. The result was that a substantially perfect bomb was completed.

The manufacture of these grenades was no easy task, as special improvised moulds and patterns had to be provided in a small way at first, then as experience and skill ripened, improvement and development accrued and larger amounts were perfected. Skilled men, such as iron moulders, brass finishers, metal workers, etc., all members of the I.R.A., were in demand. Some of the work entrusted to these men was carried out in the workshops where they were employed or otherwise. The work associated with the filling of the grenade - the packing of the gelignite - was of a tedious, trying and sensitive nature - sensitive especially in the initial stages when it had to be handled and cut to required size and form. The "fumes" or odour emanating from it generally caused a feeling of sickness, nausea and

headaches of a very exceptional type, but after habitual work on the "stuff" one became immune from such distressing symptoms. I had known cases, indeed I had personal experience of this: the strange part of it was that when a person got used to the handling of this substance one could literally do anything with it short of causing an explosion without causing any sensation affecting one's health or peace of mind. That is not saying that the substance could be or should be handled carelessly. As it was highly sensitive and dangerous, the greatest caution had to be exercised in manipulating and rendering it capable of service. To this end great care had to be taken for its storage as it was sensitive to temperature and climatic elements. This question of storage always presented a problem of particular magnitude and importance - when the stuff was in its raw state and capable of being tucked away by itself, or alternatively, when it was contained in the bombs, and were placed in dumps of various types and characteristics. The latter course did not always promise guarantee for preserving the "life" and durability of the explosive. Rather the opposite, when they were stored in places or dumps that were none too dry and otherwise unsuitable for such a commodity. The big difficulty, indeed the main difficulty, was that they had to be stored away in that state.

In many instances, particularly in the initial stages, individual members of the I.R.A. and trusted supporters of same, provided storage spaces for munitions of one kind or other - in houses, yards, gardens or stables - any place deemed safe for such a purpose. Such were provided and availed of mostly for the purpose of keeping the materials from falling into the hands of British raiding parties, then quite busy and attentive

in the matter. In many instances the dumps were in out-of-the-way places, as hard for the I.R.A. to get at as for the English to find. Consequently the stuff could be considered safe but not always in good condition. Not infrequently, however, were they stored in relatively easy to-get-at places, in which case they could be kept under observation and ordinary precautions taken to look them over at certain times. This called for ingenuity and enterprise. But even the best and most concealed dump could not be considered entirely safe from raids. Hence the generally accepted plan was to store munitions in places that provided safety even at the expense of durability, in all cases taking reasonable precautions to pack them in the neatest and tidiest way possible to counteract dampness and provide against exposure from the weather. Even the most reasonable provisions for safeguarding the materials were not always successful, and the British boast that they captured arms and munitions in raids and searches, even allowing for a certain measure of exaggeration, were proven to be true in too many instances. Much of the seized goods were secured after a good deal of trouble and labour, for the I.R.A. were sufficiently wide awake at the time not to leave such material in a convenient accessible place for raiders. Any who acted otherwise were infringing orders of the I.R.A. which specifically enjoined care and precaution in the matter of providing protection for all war materials in their custody.

It must be understood that the I.R.A., by reason of its limited authority and sphere, and not least the absence of possessions and buildings for storage,

depended in a large measure on its own members and supporters to afford facilities for the dumping of arms etc. The utilisation of halls and buildings for drilling and meetings of the units, as well as the purchase of war material, even to the smallest detail, (not the least were the "home-made" grenades then produced by the I.R.A. authorities and rifles and revolvers passing into Company possession) had to be paid for out of funds subscribed by the members - a few pence per week being the minimum sum subscribed in that way. Of course, each Company unit as well, endeavoured to supplement such funds by means of concerts, dances, raffles etc. In addition, Companies were required to subscribe towards Battalion expenditure. The acquiring of such funds for such purposes was always an acute problem for Companies. It was particularly so in 1920 when, due to the intensified activities of the British and because the I.R.A. had to remain discreetly an underground force and not publicly show itself, functions in support of the I.R.A. as such could not be publicly advertised or promoted. Efforts had, however, from time to time been made to solicit subscriptions to a common arms' fund. In respect to this matter mention must be made that we - the I.R.A. - could always rely and always secured ready and willing public support, as when Companies in their own particular Company areas/^{from time to time} conducted ~~xxx~~ house-to-house collections for the purpose. In other ways too, ample public support was rendered, such as subscriptions and donations on a weekly basis to the funds for providing financial assistance to the dependants of the prisoners etc. The White Cross was the medium at this time for such praiseworthy humanitarian work, the I.R.A. and its auxiliary bodies, including the Cumann na mBan, markedly assisting thereby.

As a movement that had to work underground we were required to protect any materials entrusted us, - at any cost. Not all men of the I.R.A. were able to store munitions, however, but those who performed the service did it out of downright love for the cause regardless of risk or any token of inconvenience. In this way they performed a double service by giving themselves to the I.R.A. and by minding the precious materials. It must be understood also that this minding of munitions involved the safety of one's household. There were even instances where wives, parents and other relations were "in on the secret" of munition minding. Lucky for the man who was so circumstanced, and they were legion. But there were cases where men had to play hide and seek with their own families, prudence or perhaps over-prudence suggesting such a course. It was an age of psychology, a time when one's safety and the safety of the war materials depended on keeping one's own counsel, which consideration was the best course to pursue as it was equally necessary to refrain from sharing secrets as much as possible in such matters as these.

Many chapters could be written on this subject and innumerable instances could be given on the relatively fine spirit and patriotism of many a parent or relative who stood in on this work and respected the secrets entrusted to their care. No cause could be better served - no more honourably discharged by human kind. Without their help we in the I.R.A., as an effective and live organism might not have withstood the onslaughts of England's might and machinations then provokingly exhibited in devious ways for what they declared the preservation of law and order.

Thus the I.R.A. were well and truly served by good friends and loyal supporters who never failed in any circumstance or for any reason in fulfillment of any task entrusted them.

This matter of the storing of munitions caused many officers a good deal of anxiety. It was bad enough having to allot individual items to members of units, but when it came to arranging safe storage places for large quantities of munitions difficulties of a very perplexing character presented themselves. Material was accumulating - at least that was so in our Company - by the addition of the new grenades. In consequence of this provisions other than the utilisation of the several storage places or dumps in private houses had to be made. Arrangements were made to provide various dumps for Brigade, Battalion and Company munitions, in some instances to provide one or more for such units. This provision did not necessarily imply as far as Companies were concerned, of putting "all the eggs in the one basket". In many cases they were intended to supplement existing arrangements, the dumps already available by members and friends being continued as independent ones. Already some individual members of the I.R.A. possessed either a revolver, rifle or shot gun of different patterns with a quantity of ammunition for same. But there were other materials, the latest arrival being grenades that were deposited in various places. This gave rise to the necessity for extending dumping facilities.

The year that had passed had seen our Company strong, well-trained, and having carried out many activities besides those already listed. A raid for

arms at Alexander Basin brought us a number of rifles. A raid at Ballsbridge for motor cycle/^{combination.} in which about ten men of the Company under Capt. S. Flood armed and carrying petrol journeyed from the north city by tram brought us into close proximity to the Beggars Bush Military Barracks and the Ballsbridge Police Barracks. proved unsuccessful. We also paraded in groups under arms on Armistice day and night, protecting national buildings in Parnell St. and carrying out police patrol duties. During the year two members of our Company had passed to their eternal reward - Charles Lyons, son of our Adjutant John E. Lyons, and Joseph Bevan, (father of Thomas and Charlie, both of whom underwent imprisonment in Lewes prison after the Rising) who served in "C" Coy from the inception and participated in the Rising under Capt. Frank Fahy at the Four Courts and was also interned at Frongoch. Imprisonment left a mark on his health for he died in Pigeonhouse Sanatorium. Charles Lyons, Charlie as he was commonly called, served in C Coy from the inception of the Irish Volunteers. He participated in the Rising 1916 at the Four Courts, being interned in Frongoch subsequently. The Company rendered to each of these full military honours and supplied a firing party at the graveside. Joe Bevan who was the father of three boys and two girls, all of whom were serving in the Republican forces - the girls in the Cumann na mBan, an auxiliary to the I.R.A. - could be said to be a forceable and yet humorous character. The story is recorded that at a time when the wearing of Volunteer uniforms were banned Joe, for a wager, walked from his home in Geraldine St. to Hoban's shop in Parnell St. and returned to his home in the uniform he had worn in Easter Week. In point of

fact he did this in a quite matter of fact way, much to the surprise of many of his friends and the chagrin of those who challenged him.

In recording the progress of events associated with the War of Independence as conducted by the I.R.A. up to date, it must be borne in mind that the political and military situation in Ireland had reached a point where the only thing that mattered was to carry on, to brave the difficulties and to force the pace. There was no question of going back - I.R.A. orders suggested instead an intensification in all fields of activity. We had braved 1919 and had been dealt a few hard blows - if seizures of war material and arrests of our men could be termed heavy blows. Raids by the British forces on an unprecedented widespread scale had become the order of the day, which indicated that the British authorities played hard to crush the I.R.A. and in so doing sought to make a bold bid to come to physical handgrips with a force that was elusive and baffling. But the British with all their power, brains and state craft misjudged the men who were arrayed against them. Never before had Dublin Castle failed on the task of governing in the face of such determined political and national opposition of the rebelly Irish. Never before had men, calling themselves soldiers - soldiers of the Irish Republic - showed such grit and determination in defiance of "the law" and for the purpose of keeping alive a state of anarchy bordering on open rebellion as British ministers alleged. In misjudging the I.R.A. the British Government fell into the trap of misjudging the Irish race.

Suffice it to say that entering into the year 1920 the I.R.A. had found their sea legs. Already there were signs of increasing militant activity. In Dublin alone regular nightly patrols were conducted and our men were operating in Company areas. The work connected with furnishing armed protective parties to guard the Executive, Brigade and Battalion meetings at Parnell Square had become a regular feature of routine events with our Battalion and Company. Events had moved fast in the country for on the 13th January four counties - Clare, Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny - were placed under martial law. Information had become available of the burning and the capture of numerous police barracks. In connection with these happenings it is well to mention that in several instances officers of the Dublin Brigade were utilised for these attacks on R.I.C. barracks and on many occasions took command of the local or other units engaged in that task. Rumour even suggested that our own Captain, Seán Flood, engaged in such operations at the time. The destruction of the R.I.C. barracks constituted a major operation for in the process of their elimination a gradual weakening of the influence of the British authority resulted. Consideration must be given to the point that the R.I.C., a well trained semi-military and armed police force, formed the eyes and ears for British rule in Ireland. That force was more potent, influential and trustworthy than a similar number of British soldiery. Well the British knew that without a native constabulary the Irish could not be governed except by the naked sword, for the main source of strength inherent in the R.I.C. was not so much due to their training or their armaments but that they

sprung from the native population. In other words they lived, loved and had their being in the native order. Proverbially they were masters, rulers and guardsmen to keep the Irish quiet, subservient and law-abiding.

Whilst these militant events were occurring due to the pressure being exerted by the I.R.A. throughout the country, the political barometer indicated a favourable turn in the fortunes and prestige of the Republican cause. The city and urban elections held on the 15th January 1920 demonstrated an overwhelming victory for the Republican party (Sinn Féin). That victory of the polls was all the more marked because for the first time in electoral history the system of proportional representation was applied. It must be understood that this system of voting was devised by the British Government in order to prevent the Republican movement obtaining an overall majority as happened at the parliamentary elections 13 months previously. The British Government were in no mood for having another Irish landslide. In reality the local elections proved a boomerang to British hopes and British intrigues. Whatever doubts they may have had about the true feelings of the Irish people on the political issue prior to these elections must have been rudely shattered in the presence of the victory - the democratic expression of the Irish people to be free.

The contribution which the I.R.A. personnel and authorities of the Dublin Brigade gave in this and in previous election and elections, parliamentary or

local, was very marked. Indeed without such help Sinn Fein, the political arm, could hardly have succeeded. Most, if not all the candidates were I.R.A. men and had been out in the Easter Week Rising. In the electoral area College Green Constituency in which I resided, Sean T. O'Kelly (now President of Ireland) was our standard bearer, and thus it came to pass that I had at each election acted as one of the constituency canvassing agents (on the orders of the constituency), helped and assisted by large numbers of other I.R.A. members of the O'Flanagan Sinn Fein Club or otherwise. Many of those belonged to 'C' and 'H' Company and some in other Companies of the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

The British Government's answer to these political happenings, however, was none other than "firm rule" and still more "firm rule".

On the 31st January 1920 British forces raided the shop of Heron and Lawless in Parnell Street, Dublin. The I.R.A. were carrying on a munition factory there. The British found some bomb castings and equipment. The find was a serious blow to the Dublin Brigade and the I.R.A. generally at a time when the flow of grenades to Companies was being accelerated. Many men surmised that the place had been given away by some local informer, though there were conjectures that it was just an ordinary raid and that the British "fell" on the stuff more by chance than as a result of information sought or obtained.

Around this time a new force had been instituted in the I.R.A., namely the Republican Police. Dail Eireann had meanwhile established Republican Courts.

thereby holding up the functions and affairs of the alien (British) Courts and administering a ready made code of justice. As the ordinary police governed by Dublin Castle were being undermined by the Republican influence and activity and loosening their grip on matters appertaining to common law and jurisdiction, the initiative to create a rival police force was a sign of the changing times. It was an expedient both novel and extraordinary. Since 1916 the R.I.C. and Dublin Metropolitan Police had devoted particular attention to political affairs. They were more concerned with curbing the power of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. than in grappling with criminality and lawlessness. They had as a result permitted ordinary crime-doers, criminal gangsters and robbers a certain measure of freedom to pursue their lawless associations. This could, at least, be said of Dublin where within the previous twelve months the robber element had had full sway, the ordinary police holding aloof by omission or commission from exercising their authority on behalf of law and order. Within that same period, and before, that force worked, acted and sought the destruction of "illegal organisations" of which the I.R.A. was declared to be one of the worst offenders. That same police force had been conspicuous in tracking down Volunteers, in carrying out raids on I.R.A. men's homes and on premises where I.R.A. were suspected of meeting or drilling. They (the D.M.P.) had been busy in making swoops on I.R.A. engaged in training and manoeuvres in the Dublin suburbs and had, and were, acting as guides to the British soldiers on raids and searches with such vigour and constancy as to take up almost their whole time on political

"crime" rather than any other type of offence within the common law.

In instituting a rival force the I.R.A. took a bold step. As far as Dublin was concerned it was a very necessary one. The diminishing power of the Dublin Metropolitan Police Force had created a situation whereby robbery and those who lived on robbery thrived. Much of this robbery was perpetrated allegedly in the name of the I.R.A., the robbers claiming association with the I.R.A. and in many instances getting away with it and the booty as well. Efforts had been made by the I.R.A. in Dublin to deal with the several gangs that were plying their robber trade so well and so effectively. Many I.R.A. officers had conducted groups of their men to the thieves dens, arresting numbers of them. Peadar Clancy was foremost in this effort to put ^{down} these gangs. Some of those arrested were brought to trial, sometimes brought to an unknown destination and, as happened in a few instances were ordered to leave the country. There were hints too, which suggested that the lash was used against some of the worst types of evil doers or leaders of the gangs. While these measures were being taking much valuable time and energy that could otherwise be used for purposes connected with I.R.A. affairs were unhappily fritted away.

Thus came into being the Republican police, a force under the aegis of the I.R.A. and Dáil Éireann and operating under the authority of officers specially appointed for the purpose. This force had a supplementary or auxiliary status and was composed in the following manner. Each Battalion formed a

a police unit under a Battalion Police Officer. At a later date the scheme admitted of the appointment of a Company Police Officer and a couple of men to work under his orders. The Company Police Officer in turn was under direct orders of the Battalion Police Officer, and the latter under Brigade Police Officer, much on the same principle as the Intelligence system or special services like First-aid and Signalling. As the Intelligence officers devoted their services to things military, the Republican Police engaged in work of a purely civilian character except that it operated within the framework of the military - the I.R.A. machine. The Battalion Police Officer was a member of Battalion Staff under the Battalion Commandant's control.

Not all the work entrusted to the Republican Police was concerned with robbery or robber gangs. Among their other functions they had to contend with not a few domestic problems, such as trying to compose family differences and squabbles etc. But let us not anticipate events. Much of their work centred around the functioning and administration of the Republican Courts set up by Dáil Éireann which they helped to support and maintain. These Courts, working under great difficulties and in defiance of British law, depended on secrecy and good-will as between the various classes that composed its personnell or those who made use of the machinery on matters concerned with questions of law; justices and members of the legal profession and litigants respected and gave dutiful obedience to its authority even though some of the latter practiced in the alien courts.

Around the period under review the British had

their hands full with Irish prisoners for on the 12th February it was reported that the Irish jails were overcrowded. As a proof of I.R.A. activity curfew was instituted by the British in Dublin on the 23rd of that month between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. Then on the 5th March came the startling announcement from Dublin Castle of I.R.A. attacks on R.I.C. barracks. On March 7th the British ordered disclosure of Bank records, appointing later on in the month Allen Bell to pursue the foul work. That personage became records examiner of British Intelligence. The purpose of this move was to ascertain and seize funds connected with national organisations, Sinn Féin, the I.R.A. and Dáil Loan. In the south of Ireland terrible scenes were happening. Many houses in Cork city were wrecked. This was followed on the 25th by the arrival of the Black and Tans in Ireland, a new force, that had been recruited in England from ex British soldiers in order, as the British Government stated, to supplement the existing R.I.C. force. Its basis was purely military. It was intended to be a military establishment trained and equipped to deal in a military fashion with the Irish problem, or rather to deal with the I.R.A. by force of arms.

The full significance of this new force became apparent when a few days later, on the 29th, Sir Neville Macready was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, followed by the appointment of Sir Hamar Greenwood as Chief Secretary for Ireland. These appointments signalled the advent of stronger and harsher military measures against the forces of disorder and anarchy - as the I.R.A. were termed by

the British. We in the I.R.A. had no doubts what these strong measures portended. We could not fail to notice that the military jack-boot was very much in evidence in the work-a-day life of the country called Ireland, and what was ^{more} pertinent to the point the British military and political machine by the expedient and their new appointments were in process of overhauling for a new offensive - or was it to be the old offensive with new and fresh leadership and personnel? There could be no question about the British Government's intentions in the matter of ruling Ireland by the strong arm of the law - the inauguration of the Black and Tans afforded complete proof of that. In connection with this appellation - Black and Tans - it may be necessary to mention that it was derived from their sartorial attire which consisted of a mixture of, in some cases, khaki tunic and black R.I.C. trousers or black R.I.C. tunic with khaki trousers. The name was applied by some Irish wag. That name was accepted by the Irish people as the fitting title for a force that had been thrown into Ireland to settle the Irish mess. At a later period a shorter term - the Tans - was used, particularly by Republicans, to describe the force.

Everything pointed in the direction of stirring times ahead, for the I.R.A. particularly, and for the Irish people in general. The new policy adopted by the British authorities gave to the Black and Tans virtual authority over the lives and fortunes of the people of Ireland. That policy incorporated reprisals, murders, burnings and innumerable forms of savage activity. Frightfulness and terror became the order

of the day; destructions and killings became common throughout the land by night. The Black and Tans carried these to a fine art. In their wild mad careering through Ireland they shot up, blew up and burned out peasant homes, business stores, creameries and industrial concerns. The assassination of officers and members of the I.R.A. and of Republicans was instituted in order to strike terror into the hearts of those who were defying British authority. These assassinations initiated by the murder of Lord Mayor MacCurtain in Cork, were declared to be "unofficial acts" when proof was established that they were perpetrated by members of the armed British forces. When no such proof was forthcoming efforts were made to foist the crime or crimes on the I.R.A., the implication being that the I.R.A. had imposed the punishment because the victim was regarded as an unworthy I.R.A. man - in other words a traitor. The British authorities, advised by Hamar Greenwood, were in the mood to grapple with the I.R.A., and in so doing had no desire to call halt to the orgy that they had involved but rather advanced the plea that the situation in Ireland called for strong, very strong measures.

Meanwhile the I.R.A. were showing signs of activity. On April 4th the Dublin Brigade burned numerous Income Tax offices in various parts of Dublin and on the 5th hundreds of R.I.C. barracks were destroyed. Then on the 7th news was flashed broadcast that 70 I.R.A. prisoners in Mountjoy Jail had started a hunger strike. That place became a mecca for Republican Dublin, for on the 12th Dublin citizens thronged outside that prison keeping vigil during the

day and up to curfew hour, prayers being continuously said for the "poor prisoners". Organised labour declared a general strike throughout Ireland in support of the hunger-strikers, closing down all but essential public services. A fortnight later, on the 28th April, 350 Republican prisoners were on hunger-strike in various jails in Ireland.

Events were moving fast. The inquest on the death of Thomas MacCurtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, had been held, and on the 18th April a verdict was given laying the murder of that I.R.A. officer against the British Premier. On May 1st the "Irish Times" in an editorial declared that "the Crown forces were being driven back by an advancing enemy". As if to give proof of this declaration, several sensational happenings were reported during that month. On the 7th Cloyne (Co. Cork) R.I.C. barracks was captured by I.R.A., on the 20th dockers in Dublin refused to handle British war material, their places being taken by British troops, on the 28th Kilmallock R.I.C. barracks was attacked by I.R.A. and on the 29th railwaymen refused to handle war material destined for the British forces.

The Dublin Brigade was again to come to the fore. On the 1st June a skilful and daring raid was successfully carried out at the King's Inns when a British military guard was pounced upon by selected men, mostly of the 1st Battalion, disarmed and their rifles taken safely away. In this operation our Company was well represented, about eleven of us participating. Assembling at 46 Parnell Square, Vice Brigadier Clancy allotted officers and men to the various groups.

About 30 men were so detailed, formed into 3 or 4 groups, an officer in charge of each, every man armed with a revolver. The position of the King's Inns was such that entrance could be effected from three points - two of which through wicket gates from the Constitution Hill which led into what was known as 'the Temple', a space used as a public park, and the other entrance from Henrietta Street through a large iron gateway and small gates on each side. These led into an enclosed space that stretched for about 50 yards until it met another iron gateway and side doors of similar design through which pedestrian traffic passed into 'the Temple'. These centre gates were not frequently used for vehicular traffic. Inside and to the left at the gate leading to the 'Temple', was a doorway that afforded entrance to the guardroom, a couple of rooms away on the ground floor.

In giving us our orders Vice Brigadier Clancy had advised that the operation depended on surprise and speed. He allotted us seven minutes in which to carry out the job, the timing to commence from our arrival there and our getaway. On the previous day we had been mobilised for that action. We missed it because it was raining. Naturally we smiled at the remark "it couldn't be carried out because it is raining". Peadar caught our smiles, and by the time he had explained the why and the wherefore of that we were convinced that there was logic in not making the attack that day. Hence it was postponed then. All the men who had been present then were on duty on the 1st although Peadar had offered to excuse any man who felt he would be unable by reason of his employment

to attend the second day in succession. Many of our men had borrowed a few hours leave. Some had slipped out from their work hoping, if such were necessary, to cover up their absence by some plausible excuse. So keen was enthusiasm and such a fine sense of desire to participate in the enterprise that no man felt inclined to call off or withdraw from it.

Fortunately for us the weather on that second day was warm and sunny. We had perforce to wait for a spell until information concerning the activity or inactivity of the British garrison was forthcoming sufficient to set our plans to the test. At last we were given the order to get going. Every man knew what was required to be done - each group had its allotted task. The first group to leave No. 46 was entrusted the task to deal jointly with such members of the guard who were lolling about and playing truant to their lady friends (a common procedure adopted when the weather was fine for those off duty) and likewise to deal with sentries, overpower them and make for the guard-room where the war material was situated. Special men of that first party had been detailed to disconnect telephonic and alarm apparatus. On the heels of that party was another group charged with the task of effecting entrance to the rear door of the guard-room, timed to synchronise with the movements of the first party thus ensuring the essential element of surprise. Another party, that to which I was assigned, was given the task to look after affairs outside, to form a screen of protection at the various entrances and afford cover for men and materials. Some of this party also were to supervise the loading

and dispatch of the captured war material into a motor car or cars that were to be available for service on the occasion. In addition, another group of our Company were on duty at points at the end of Henrietta St. and byeways, whose duty it was to afford additional protection to all the party, give timely warning of the approach of the enemy should such be sent to the scene, and also to assist in helping men to get safely away after the raid.

Arriving at the rendezvous, everything worked out according to plan; the first group meeting opposition successfully accomplished its initial task, the second group fared differently, lost direction by entering the wrong door and suffered the loss of valuable time in finding the right one, the third and fourth group were already in position even to the point of closing the gates at Constitution Hill. Would the raid be successful? Minutes rolled by, minutes that seemed eternal. Those of us outside wondered how the raid was progressing inside the building. Before we knew what was what the stuff was being brought out to the motor car, rifles, ammunition, equipment and a machine gun. For a moment we nearly forgot ourselves, being beside ourselves with joy and excitement at the sight of the captured booty, especially so when Kevin Barry, wearing a "tin hat" and carrying a machine gun came out to the car - joking all the time. Others too flushed with the sense of success bore their trophies outside, returning for more. In this manner every trace of war material was accounted for and the car bearing these sped on its way, followed in quick succession by the several groups beating a hasty getaway, down the street in a more mysterious way than

when we had previously arrived.

In the excitement of the raid many a man had lost count of time, but as it was we had performed the task a minute or so short of schedule. One of the party had even forgotten to dispose of a telephone receiver and wiring which he unknowingly held firm in his hand as he ran down the street, and through other streets, before he discovered the omission. Many thought the distance down Henrietta St. increased tenfold and all were relieved to get into other thoroughfares. Time was a big factor then, for at any moment the British would be on the scene from the nearest barracks at the North Dublin Union, a few minutes motor drive from the King's Inns. The enterprise was not without its humour too. In "falling in" with one of our men in a laneway some short distance away I had referred to the raid being hard going. Quick as lightning my friend humorously remarked, "a bottle of stout would go down well with it now". One could guess by the way we put the road under us that nothing would tempt to tarry us and such guessing would be right that time, for our main concern was to get as far away from the scene as we possibly could before the "powers that be" got moving. And we did, some of us to the point of boarding trams or by commandeering an odd bicycle to take us to less troublous quarters.

Undoubtedly our Vice Brigadier, Peadar Clancy, by good timing and careful planning of the enterprise achieved notoriety among us all - the coup, thanks to him and to those who collaborated with him, was successful to the minutest detail. Brigadier McKee also had assisted in the planning of the coup for he

was present in 46. Its success gave a new fillip to many who had become too used to forlorn hopes and had had quite a number of previous disappointments to record. In this instance the men who participated could afford to be elated for scoring a success without suffering any loss or even inflicting loss on the British garrison, as the intention was to capture munitions and "not to shoot unless in extreme circumstances". A greater cause for elation was the fact that the men were under orders for two days and fully prepared for any risk. To some it meant the loss of several hours' wages, to others a day or two had to be sacrificed. Another matter that was worthy of consideration, upon which and because of which the success of that coup was largely due, and that was leadership. If any man was worthy of the title of leader that man was Peadar Clancy. He perhaps could lay worthy claim to full honours for its success. He may or may not have been the brains that conceived it, but it could be said that his personality, his fine manly character and extraordinary methodical grip of military tactics, combined with a keen sense of placing men to the best advantage, conduced enormously to the success of the exploit, perhaps as much as the bravery, dash and daring of those who carried it out. His was the cool reasoned mind capable of planning any type of activity, but he was at his best in detailing orders and giving instructions in such affairs as these. In this respect one felt safe and sure of doing things in accordance with his direction. It is not given to many people to possess great powers of leadership and command. He possessed them in a marked degree, and not these alone, for he had the power of communicating

his own intrepid spirit and unbounding enthusiasm to those whose lot it was to share in any enterprise planned by him.

Was it any wonder that men of the Dublin Brigade who had had experience of his leadership, worshipped him? It could be truly said that one could go gladly and with confidence into any peril directed or commanded by Peadar, for he always planned for success. More than that, he planned for the safety of his men. Every detail however slight was weighed, every possible contingency was considered, but always it was a fundamental law with him to register surprise, to strike at the right time and in the right place, and by utilising the minimum of men and material to apply guerrilla tactics to every form of military activity.

Peadar Clancy was not alone in the class of guerrilla leaders of the period as far as the Dublin Brigade was concerned. Another man of similar qualities leadership and daring was Dick McKee, our Brigadier. He and Peadar were a complete pair militarily; each had the same military outlook, were guided by the same principles to fight whatever the cost, but never give in; each were "go ahead" at all times just as they were influenced and influenced others to be up and doing, seeking to put into practice what had become to be known as the "hit and run" policy of the I.R.A. Each was refined, quiet, reserved, dignified and of lovable and gentle disposition. Peadar was held to be the more "up and at them" type of military strategist, due perhaps to the feats of daring with which he was accredited and which had become legendary. It had even been whispered by some who had a fair measure of

contact with him that he had become harsh or a kind of hardened. Yet were one given the task to prove the veracity of the assertion, the not improbable result would be to find him self-possessed, impulsive and consciously determined. These latter qualities could with equal force be applied to Dick to a greater or lesser degree consistent with his work and his activities as a leader of men at a time when the race was to the strong and the active, and the only qualifications incumbent on leaders of the I.R.A. was to pursue a strong and aggressive policy. These two formed a faithful, perfect and almost true to life kinship, to the advantage and the edification of the Dublin Brigade, the members of which regarded them as worthy to command and equally worthy of respect, devotion and obedience.

With reference to the raid on King's Inns, an incident centring around the personality of our Company Captain Seán Flood may be worthy of mention. He was present at 46 on the two days referred to. In assigning officers for the various groups, Seán's name was not mentioned. He was naturally beside himself with anger and disappointment. He fought the issue with the Brigadier and Vice Brigadier. "Why am I left out? Why can't I go on the job?", he argued, pleaded, raged with all the force at his command. It was a sad heart-rending sight to see him, tears in his eyes and showing signs of extreme distress and embarrassment. He felt slurred, put aside as if he were not worthy to engage in the undertaking. To those of us who knew his invaluable worth and his sterling qualities, who appreciated the fact that he

was eagerly bent on taking his part with the other participants, the deprivation occasioned acute sorrow and genuine hardship. The decision not to let him go on the job was, we were assured, not intended as a slight on his person or his courage, that the only reason for taking this course was because he was so conspicuous in appearance and build, that he might be too easily traced and tracked where people of more ordinary sizes might escape recognition. This was not Seán's way of looking at things. He preferred to take equal chances and risks in any chosen activity and to perform the most menial task if such were required of him as an officer or as one of the rank and file, regardless of the consequences or oblivious of any danger resulting therefrom. We all felt it was hard for him to knuckle down to the conditions imposed, but true Volunteer that he was he accepted, with some reluctance on his part, the inevitable course. This was a disagreeable as it was an unfortunate choice, but in acquiescing he came out of the situation with flying colours, feeling secure that he had lost nothing in the affection and confidence of all concerned, whether officers or men, all of whom regarded him in no other light than as a good, brave and loyal I.R.A. officer.

At this point it may be necessary to refer by way of illustration, to the very delicate subject of performing I.R.A. work free from detection and recognition by the common public. Actually all our successes were linked up with, and dependent on complete secrecy, with no special leanings for the limelight. We were an invisible force. As such we had to exercise caution, circumspection - if that is the right

word - to keep out of the public gaze as much as possible. "The less they see and know, the less they will be able to talk about" was a wise axiom. There were too many agents of the British in our midst to permit loose movement or loose talking. But to return to the illustration of the point. It so happened that on the occasion of that raid a few of our men heard their names mentioned by some civilians living in the vicinity, just as they (our men) were getting away from the scene. What if British agents were about at the time and made use of the information? What if the civilians themselves might pass on the information to the Castle? Such things were possible. There was even danger that such people might be too talkative about what they saw of and whom they saw in the raid. Consequently a word to the wise was deemed advisable, for before many hours had elapsed ample warning was issued to them in order to prevent the information falling into the hands of the enemy. In other words the civilians concerned were warned to keep their mouths shut.

The next day, June 2nd, came news of 10 R.I.C. barracks seized by I.R.A., followed by the destruction of Cappawhite and Drangan R.I.C. barracks, the disarming of British troops in Middleton, Co. Cork, the destruction of King St. barracks, Cork, on the 4th, 5th and 30th respectively, while on the 3rd the British reported that Republican police were functioning in 21 counties. Dublin again came into the news for on the 30th June curfew was altered from 12 p.m. to 3 a.m., and on the 6th July the Black and Tans made their first appearance in the streets of the metropolis. Everything pointed in the direction of an intensification of British

military activity in Dublin Brigade area. The British were sparing no effort to secure the defeat of the I.R.A. and the inclusion of the Black and Tans in their plan of campaign indicated the employment of more cruel, repressive measures. We in Dublin were to witness the perambulations, suffer the affronts and bear the blows of a force that had already, in the short space of its existence, engraved the words "law and order", of which they were proclaimed the almighty defenders, in a profusion of Irish blood. The main questions that concerned us members of the Dublin Brigade I.R.A. were: Would we be able to withstand the new assault of what appeared to be the foreign legion? How would we re-act to the situation that afforded full play to the would be military overlords and ^{which} gave them complete leave and licence to conduct token warfare within or without the law?

Instead of striking terror into the I.R.A. the advent of the Black and Tans into the Dublin arena produced the opposite effect. Came the 15th of the month when a raid was made on the Dublin G.P.O. for English mails. A large number of the Dublin Brigade, specially selected men, carried out this raid which was regarded as successful. The G.P.O. was then housed in the Rotunda Rink to the rear of the Rotunda Hospital. In this way much valuable information concerning British agents and supporters of and informers for the British regime was secured. Around this time reports were circulated that the British Courts were unable to function. Dick McKee took up duties as Director of Training and was engaged in printing an t-Óglach, the I.R.A. official organ.

That paper was of invaluable assistance to our movement in more senses than one. It was mainly devoted to military matters - instructions on various subjects of training, the art of war and military technique. Besides, it kept the political aims of the I.R.A., the complete independence of Ireland, ever to the forefront and went a long way in contributing to the progress and well being of the I.R.A. force as a whole. Without such a virile and patriotic agency the I.R.A. would have found the task of continuing the fight not alone more difficult but acutely distressing. It acted as an antidote to other papers and agencies that were equally virile and less patriotic and more desirous that the I.R.A. should play with resolutions than to engage in revolution. An t-Óglach then, circulating privately within the confines of the I.R.A., depended on the support of men of that force as it bridged the gap between the official British reports and the ordinary newspaper accounts of the political and military course of events of the time. In point of fact it exercised a strong and sustaining influence among all ranks of the I.R.A. out of all proportion to its diminutive size or its literary merit or of the printers. Whatever its other imperfections, it stressed the need for and upheld the fight then being waged by the I.R.A. It kept the flag of Ireland aloft, thereby winning a place and name as a revolutionary journal, perhaps the only revolutionary organ in the world supporting a guerilla army.

Chapter 16.

A new innovation in the domestic affairs of the I.R.A. and Sinn Féin was introduced about this time in the establishment of a secret post office service. Several shops in the Dublin area were designated as posting centres where letters could be left. A team of "postmen" which consisted of selected men of the I.R.A. or boys of the Fianna looked after the delivery service. One of these posting centres in our area was at Maurice Collins's tobacconist and newsagent shop in Parnell St. Maurice had been a civil servant who had suffered dismissal because of his patriotic activities - he had participated in the Rising and was then actively associated with the Volunteer and G.A.A. movements. That posting service received good support from the Volunteers and other groups of Republicans. Besides that, there were instituted by the I.R.A. and for I.R.A. purposes, call offices, shops or houses where letters or messages could be left in safety to be called for on behalf of certain I.R.A. personages or parties. These arrangements had been made for dual reasons, one of which aimed at boycotting the English postal system, and the other to counteract the espionage carried on in that service on the orders of the British authorities. It was known at the time that letters addressed to persons connected with the I.R.A. and Republican movement were tampered with in the post. Things had reached the stage when precaution became virtually necessary in order to deny to the British access to important documentary evidence of the I.R.A. and Republican activity and to secure a relatively safe and secure mode of communication.

The call offices, apart from the Republican postal service, played an important part in the administrative sphere and operational activity of the Dublin Brigade. Their functions were mainly military, while that of the Republican post were regarded as of a purely civilian and utilitarian nature. Another point of distinction was that the former was conducted secretly within the I.R.A., the latter semi-publicly among Republican people associated with Sinn Féin clubs and I.R.A. members.

It was extremely difficult to maintain an "illegal postal service" during a period of intense widespread raiding by the British forces when such places as described were being subjected to searches for one reason or other, or on the pretext of raiding for wanted men, for arms or for seditious papers or documents. While on the subject of seditious documents and papers, it might be well to refer to the fact that newsagents and people purveying in the printing and sale of papers or publications were often visited by British Crown Forces in order to seize offending printing matters. National papers, song sheets, patriotic post cards and other types of literature deemed to be "seditious" were confiscated, the publishers and vendors having to suffer in patience the loss of their wares and the forms of annoyances associated with the searching of their premises. As a rule these raiding parties were none too gentle or gentlemanly, were sufficiently officious and methodical to leave the places so visited a dishevelled mess. It happened in quite a considerable number of cases that the "finds" were of such importance in the

eyes of the British authorities as to warrant the arrest of the owners of the premises and consequential punishment for being in possession of, or for selling, illegal and seditious documents or publications. Were they caught trafficking in, or conducting an illegal postal service the punishment would be invariably greater. Yet notwithstanding risks and difficulties there were many such men and women who accepted this or any service if it could be of any assistance in the fight that was being waged on behalf of Ireland.

During this month also the English Government declared war on the Sinn Féin Courts, many raids being made on same by British soldiers and Black and Tans. The net result of this was to cause the Courts to be held in greater secrecy. In this connection the writer had the privilege of attending one of these Courts in the Technical Schools, Parnell Square, during the hearing of a case in which a business man claimed compensation against another for a breach of contract. One could not fail to be impressed by the proceedings, dignity, good order and decorum, with a total absence of that pomp and ceremony so associated with the English product. In that instance everything was simple and business-like. Even the ordinary legal gentlemen whose calling permitted them to engage in the English courts, were quite at ease though engaged in "illegal practices". That case was amicably settled.

Towards the end of July 1920 an event or happening of startling political importance occurred. That was the wild and outrageous excesses of the Orangemen in the north of Ireland inflicted against

Irish nationalists. The Pogrom commenced, causing the deaths of 19 and the wounding of 50 people. Dublin became the city of refuge for many of the northern residents who had to fly for their lives from the Orange hordes. So serious was the position that Dáil Éireann issued a decree against the imposition of a religious test and Sinn Féin organisation declared a boycott of Belfast, and so at a later date the I.R.A. were called on to carry out the duties of enforcing the boycott of Belfast and northern goods. This gave rise to the terms "boycott patrol" and "boycott duties". In this particular sphere the Dublin Brigade I.R.A. played a very big part. Every Company was entrusted with the task of warning shopkeepers not to stock or sell goods of Belfast or northern origin, not to display or advertise same etc. A preponderatingly large number of shopkeepers in Dublin willingly acquiesced to the demands made on them and fell in with the idea of the boycott.

The carrying out of these orders imposed increasing demands on the officers and men of the Dublin Brigade, being taxed to the utmost, especially in the initial stages, in securing the maximum degree of compliance by traders and the consequential institution of proceedings against those who refused to comply. Our men then had the onerous and difficult task of obtaining a survey of places where the offending goods were displayed or sold, noting the delinquents and reporting same to higher authority. This information was easily obtained where the trader or business establishment openly defied the ban and carried on their trade openly and publicly, a procedure which few of these people or persons resorted to. Not

uncommonly the defiance took the form of pretending not to deal in boycotted goods while secretly doing so. Our duties were to track down the secret trafficking in such goods, to pit our wits against those who in that fashion sought to weaken the boycott weapon; just as much was it our duty to take necessary action against those who openly and avowedly deemed it good business to continue trading in the same without any regard for the national or even religious interest involved. Little did those people realise that their efforts in that direction would hardly be a paying proposition when the full force of a highly concentrated active and progressive Intelligence system which the I.R.A. had built up was brought into full play.

Much of our work was rendered easy by reason of the assistance that families of I.R.A. men gave in the interest of the boycott. Other classes of the community also helped, among them friendly disposed people, those who were shocked by the outrages carried out in the north and quite a large number of shopkeepers of whom a considerable number were supporters of the Republican movement. We had every reason to expect, and actually succeeded in getting in various ways and through devious channels first hand information of trading devices of clever business people who set themselves to carry on business as usual with their northern counterparts. In almost, if not in all streets, members of the I.R.A. lived; there were very few business stores or establishments that had not an I.R.A. man as an employee. Many I.R.A. men had contacts with firms, agencies and factories in the north in their several capacities as travellers, agents or

traders. With the help of such a combination as these the I.R.A. would inevitably succeed. Even without such combination - though the task might be more laborious and difficult - a certain measure of success was bound to result. Not the least noteworthy assistance was rendered by the ordinary day to day shoppers, many of them members of our own families and friends of the movement who were only too glad to get a rap at the Orange bigots.

When eventually open trading in the boycotted goods was found to be unpopular and a bad paying proposition an underground traffic was tried. Many clever devices to set at nought the boycott were initiated by some business concerns. Among these was the diverting of the goods to England to be re-transhipped to Ireland. Great care was taken to conceal manufacturer's name and source of origin, the main purpose being to create the impression that they were not Belfast or Northern but English goods. These and other devices put the Intelligence system of the I.R.A. to many a sore test, with the result that the work of enforcing the boycott extended beyond its initial scope and range. Hence measures were taken to deal with such goods in transit from or stored in shipping sheds, railways, stores or trains. Raids by I.R.A. which resulted in the destruction of the prohibited goods became common, causing extreme losses in money and material to the parties concerned in the traffic.

Such a matter as the Belfast boycott agitation was regarded as illegal by the British authorities whose interest in regard to the Orange "lamps" enabled them to institute the full rigours of the laws against

all and sundry who fell into their hands while engaged in enforcing the boycott. However, the eyes and limbs of the law could not watch and guard every place at a time when they had more than their share of work to content with in dealing other blows against the resurgent I.R.A. Hence the law, the British law, was frustrated in trying to neutralise or stop the I.R.A. boycott activity, while the ukase of Dáil Éireann, backed by the I.R.A. and supported by a very large percentage of Irish people, prevailed.

It must not be thought that everything was plain sailing for the I.R.A. Such a view was far from the truth. It caused many embarrassments and inflicted suffering on quite a number of our people inside Ulster - of Nationalist and Catholic beliefs - and, perhaps, those who were unaffected by the pogrom employed in firms that traded with the rest of Ireland. Then again our own people outside of Ulster employed by Ulster firms or agencies for their wares, had their livelihood seriously affected by the boycott. The latter class of people were our most embarrassing and sorrowful concern. It was reasonable to suppose that such people would feel the burden imposed by the boycott and its attending dislocation of a trade that hitherto flourished and progressed with the passing of time in the south east and west of Ireland. The responsibility rested on the Orange promoters of the pogrom for the losses incurred from the boycott weapon so successfully used by the I.R.A. Strange to relate the rigours of the law were not applied to the Orange bigots, true upholders of the Union whose much vaunted loyalty had caused numerous deaths.

and much suffering to many an Ulster family. Within recent years they had been pampered and literally spoonfed by the British Government. They were a highly privileged class. When the history of the period under review is written, as it must be written, the part which these bigots played in that pogrom will be recorded in the light of the horrors, infamies and humiliations that they so cruelly caused.

On the 29th July 1920 an incident of great national importance occurred. Archbishop Mannix, the beloved patriotic Prelate of Melbourne, was prohibited from landing in his native country - Ireland. The British Government, piqued by his outspoken utterances on the oppression of, and atrocities committed against the Irish people and in favour of Irish self-determination, re-directed the ship in which he was a passenger to an English port rather than to an Irish port. This extreme act denied the Irish people the privilege of paying him full honours. Plans had been prepared on a lavish scale to celebrate his visit, his home-coming among his own beloved kith and kin. As it was, the hill tops around the coast of Ireland were lit up with bonfires, flags were displayed in token of welcome. Even Dublin citizens lit bonfires on the streets, rejoicing in the event. In many instances they defied the curfew by remaining on the streets singing Irish patriotic songs and making merry around the improvised bonfires. That night, however, the Crown Forces inflicted a toll of death on some of the merry-makers, tore like mad into the streets where the fires were alight and by means of gun-play wreaked vengeance on any who were foolhardy enough to be abroad. The operations of the

curfew each night resulted in the arrest of numbers of people who, in many instances, unconsciously forgot time and misjudged distances and, in consequence, took chances in trying to evade the nocturnal patrols of British soldiers and Black and Tans, whose especial care it was to keep the citizens indoors during prohibitive hours. In point of fact, the problem of trying to beat time was perplexing and aggravating. It was not the only serious disturbing problem confronting the citizens of Dublin. In many ways it made inroads on their private and family lives, increasing their difficulties on occasions when people were sick and efforts had to be made to obtain attendance of doctors or to seek entrance to hospital, not to mention the anxieties and embarrassment caused to nightworkers and the inevitable uneasiness and fear associated with the absence of members of their households who had to remain put in other people's houses rather than face returning to their own. But even greater than all these was the continuous movement of British forces, the movement of men, motor convoys, armoured cars, the playing of huge searchlights on streets and houses, the too constant repetition of military commands to "keep inside", to "put out those lights", the not too infrequent shooting, the numerous raids on houses, causing a turmoil and uproar in a street or streets nearby. Sleep and quietude became for some hard to secure.

But to us in the I.R.A. the curfew was not merely vexatious but potentially threatening. It meant in a sense that we were static while the British remained cock of the walk, as it were complete masters of the situation, holding the city and all

contained therein literally in the hollows of their hands. This control caused us not a little uneasiness and quite a measure of embarrassment. It was a sore point with us and one that was often debated - whether measures should be taken against them during curfew. The one redeeming factor militating against our taking offensive action was that we could afford to sit low, and that being an invisible army scattered throughout a large populous area like Dublin, it was not inconceivable that by an element of good fortune we could escape the worst hazards of the operations of curfew. Military action on our part, it was generally contended at the time, might not have got us anywhere. On the contrary, it might have increased our difficulties and caused untold sufferings to not only our men but also the civilian population. The main consideration, however, was that our own headquarters gave no direction and issued no orders that would indicate that we should engage militarily in such a course of action.

In other respects the Irish situation had reached a phase of unusual disquietude. The policy of the British to impose reprisals on Ireland for every attack on Black and Tans and British military had little, if any, effect in weakening the resistance or slackening the pace and tempo of the military operations which the I.R.A. conducted throughout various parts of Ireland. Then in early August Sir Hamar Greenwood as Chief Secretary of Ireland introduced in the British House of Commons a Bill "for the restoration of law and order in Ireland". This Bill was accordingly passed on the 9th August. It

meant in practical effect the placing of the British military junta in complete charge of the destiny of Ireland, to be governed, controlled and legalised by force and force alone. In this wise the forces of disaffection and disorder - to wit the I.R.A. - were to be extirpated, debased, or otherwise brought to atonement for their cruelties and unlawful acts.

Almost coincidental with the passage of that Bill was the publication by Dublin Castle of the "Weekly Summary of Outrages", a copious and highly descriptive documentary of the happenings, events and episodes associated with the warfare then prevailing in Ireland. That publication was intended to serve the purpose of depicting the I.R.A. as a murder gang engaged in a criminal conspiracy, - not for any good or honourable reason or because they were patriotic or had love of country. In short, the I.R.A. aim was to destroy the established law. Strangely enough the British measures to maintain law and order lacked every essential condition but soldiers and Black and Tans, bullets, petrol and reprisals, jails, burning of creameries, shooting up of towns and villages and secret dead-of-night murders.

One of the new laws sanctified by the Restoration of Law and Order in Ireland Act, ironically enough, abolished inquest on those who met violent deaths. No longer would it be possible to lay a charge of murder against the forces of law and order; no longer would a jury of citizens be enabled to hear evidence and to find the cause of death of the victims of the war then raging, like those who returned murder verdict against English ministers as in the late Lord Mayor MacCurtain's case. The law decreed that

Coroners' Courts in such cases were illegal.

Things were not going well with the British cause in Ireland if one were to judge by the statement of Hamar Greenwood in the British House of Commons that 556 R.I.C. and 313 magistrates had resigned within the previous couple of months. Besides, everything pointed to a complete collapse of the R.I.C. as a police force. Gradually they had been driven from their barracks in the country. They no longer functioned as a selective and high rated force. Indeed in many places the Republican police reigned supreme. Even the endeavours of the British authorities to transfuse new life and vigour into the R.I.C. by means of the enlistment into the Black and Tans did not produce anything like the same standard of police efficiency and stability so long associated with the former force. It must not be thought, however, that the R.I.C. entirely and completely ceased to exist. They were, it is true, denied the advantages and use of hundreds of barracks scattered throughout the country. As a result, and to meet the new situation that was thrust on them by the destruction of their buildings, they withdrew to the large towns or county establishments, from which they operated by means of mobile movements. The ordinary routine of police work was largely discarded and replaced by the new methods of contacting and bringing the I.R.A. to justice.

We had come to realise that the Black and Tans and those who remained members of the R.I.C. were designed and acted as a military force. We knew that greater efforts and possibly bigger sacrifices

would be required of us in the future because of the presence of the Tans in the Dublin Brigade area. To think otherwise would be courting disaster. We were not so simple as to imagine that we could escape immunity from the devastating effect of their varied forms of activity, for it had become commonplace that the Black and Tans were capable of frightful ferocious excesses, in the pursuit of which they had the backing of the British authorities. Every deed, every misdeed performed by that force was approved and glorified by officialdom in Dublin Castle and London. Hence the Black and Tans were not slow to take full advantage of their much landed mission of restoring law and order.

Judging by the colourful accounts of their exploits in other parts of the country, which were so freely circulated at the time, we had every reason to anticipate a step up in military operations in Dublin. The one essential to meet the growing dangers which their presence foreboded was to hold our heads and to cling more resolutely and determinedly to our movement of resistance, in the full consciousness of measuring up to meet whatever blows they sought to deliver against us. The main consideration was - would the Dublin Brigade of the I.R.A. withstand the shock of the latent Black and Tan military operations? Any wavering on our part was bound to react to our disadvantage at a time when we were not unfavourably circumstanced, were we to judge by the increased activity in our force, the splendid enthusiasm and the magnificent loyalty displayed by the men.

Obviously the scenes of battle were changing and changeable, varying in form, degree and intensity according to their relative importance or quality as military operations. Daily, if not hourly, the several activities carried out by the I.R.A. and the Crown forces bespoke an almost nation-wide warfare. Towns, villages, even the most remote hamlets became arenas for raids, ambushes and reprisals, producing or reproducing a trend of affairs akin to an upheaval of not alone the political but also the social structure of that country called Ireland. The impact of that warfare was felt in many quarters and among many people. One time they emanated from I.R.A. sources; attacks on R.I.C. barracks, resulting in many instances in their capture or destruction, ambushes on Crown forces, capture of mails, boycott raids, shooting of spies etc. Other times the Crown forces engaged in multitudinous forms of activity, which included the shooting up of towns and villages, the torturing of I.R.A. prisoners, the burning of creameries, the slaying of Republicans in their homes at dead of night, the harassing of I.R.A., the incessant raids and searches of public buildings and private dwellings. In their blind folly they struck at everything and anything Irish, showing little discrimination between, and as little regard for, the various component classes of Irish life. The worst offenders in respect thereto were the Black and Tans, whose deliberate insensate policy it was to bring horror and destruction throughout the length and breadth of Ireland.

Credit where credit was due, the ordinary British soldier, if harsh, rude or overbearing at times showed at least a fair measure of discipline and

restraint. They too, in quite a number of instances, took the law into their own hands and dealt out justice with an iron hand and by means of the military jackboot. But, unlike their brothers the Black and Tans, they carried out their policy of aggression if not tenderly and kindly, at least generally openly. At close quarters the Black and Tans were found to be what the British Government intended them to be - cruel, domineering, oppressive, whose one distinguishable role to fame resided in their proficiency in the use of arms and their previous war service. Every one of them were renowned veterans of the previous world war. In other words, they were two-gun men, which was conceived to be the one prepossessing essential to their glorified adventure in Ireland. The fact that they were armed with rifle and revolver added piquant flavour to the relish of their congenial lawful avocation of dispensing appropriate medicine to the I.R.A. gunmen in particular, and the "Shinners" in general. In that task they adopted as sound military policy the rule of shooting first and asking questions afterwards; in the meantime doping their consciences that they were doing "a hellish good job" into the bargain. They had been, and were accorded by their English paymasters, full liberty and license to pursue their course of restoring law and order with a crudeness, coarseness and vindictiveness that was unprecedented in the history of the English conquest of Ireland.

Up to this time the full force of the reign of terror as practiced and carried out by the Black and Tans

in other parts of Ireland had not reached Dublin. We had been spared many horrors and many excesses. True: the Dublin people had undergone no less terrifying and mischevious ordeals, the continuous raiding, holds up and searches day and night, the presence and employment of a virtual army of spies, agents, Intelligence officers, becoming as deadly as even the worst form of military operation designed against the I.R.A. Dublin, the seat of British administration, was also the pivotal point from which radiated much of the hellish and inglorious activities of the Black and Tans. In their efforts to destroy the national movement, in their frantic endeavours to put down the I.R.A. they outstretched themselves, and, in so doing, caused an alignment of an almost unanimous people against them and in sympathy with the Irish Republican cause. Yet another instance of that was portrayed by the action of Irish railwaymen, who, following the lead of the Dublin dockers, refused to handle munition for and of the British forces, and also refusing to work trains carrying soldiers. Two thousand of these railwaymen were accordingly suspended. A very significant feature about this action was that many of the men were members of a trade union whose headquarters was in London. Quite a large number of railwaymen were I.R.A. men. It proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the British authorities had more than the "gunmen" of the I.R.A. to contend with, and that indissoluble bonds of unity existed among the various sections of the Irish population. Besides which, it demonstrated that labour by its own free will and choice, stood four square in favour of the fight being waged by the I.R.A.

The acceleration in the frequency and tempo of the raiding by the Crown forces was indeed a source

of worry to many an officer of the Dublin Brigade, worry for the safety of the men as well as the safety of war materials. Hence we find Companies around this time setting about obtaining likely safe places for storage - for dumping their stores. In many instances more than one dump was secured for the purpose. Our Company was no exception to the rule. We had quite a miscellaneous assortment of rifles, revolvers, a fair amount of grenades, ammunition and equipment, much of which was scattered around in various hiding places. The more serviceable types of revolvers were in the keeping of selected men of the Company. All such material was under charge of the Company Quartermaster, whose special duty it was to keep an accurate inventory of the names and addresses of the men responsible for the safety of same. This arrangement of spreading out our collective stores had been proven satisfactory up to a point. Occasionally we had had to make changes in the arrangements in respect to the safe custody of some portion of our munition stores, especially in the case of small arms, which from time to time had undergone many stages of distribution and re-distribution, the object in view being to provide for their proper safety and place them in the hands of the men for whatever forms of activity our Company might be engaged.

Fortunately we secured suitable premises for storing the Company's munitions - a stable with overhead loft to the rear of houses in Botanic Road. This place afforded us more than ample accommodation for the purpose in view. Of course the lady-owner of the garage or stable was not aware of our intentions. It would not be quite politic to tell her. Our

Captain - Seán Flood - rented it. He even planned to use it for a horse and car, the proprietor of which was a Volunteer who, by the same token, bore the same name and who was to take up residence there. To our great surprise our friend would not live there so that part of the arrangement went by the board, but the place was, however, used for stabling horse and van belonging to one of our men. The building itself was a substantial one, and boasted of a good concrete floor in tiled fashion.

Our job was to excavate a hole in the floor of sufficient depth and width to hold a large number of rifles and other accessories. This opening was concreted bottom, sides and top. A concrete trap door wrought and tiled to match the floor, with a special gadget for opening and closing it, was constructed. The work of constructing this "dump" was laborious for we had to work without attracting undue attention and with as little noise as possible. Besides, we were anxious to get the job done quickly, and it would not be good policy to show that we were engaged in making alterations in any way. In this we were very fortunate, as we were also fortunate in having the service of one of our members who was an inventive genius for such work - Seán Nathan. When finished it looked to be the perfect dump. We had, in consequence, no fear whatever that it could be easily, if at all, detected, although to us who had performed the work it was the embodiment of simplicity. Seán also, by means of crafty touches of carpentry, made slotted recesses and compartments in several of the wooden rafters for holding revolvers - ingenuity personified - much to the surprise and satisfaction of our Captain, Seán Flood,

and those of us in on the secret of the work in question.

We were not a bit too soon in completing the dump, for around this period we had on hands quite an amount of war-like materials, a good portion of which we considered should have to be called in for reasons of safety. Many of our men were unable to provide ample safety for at least the larger types, such as rifles and shot guns, especially those who lived in tenement houses or in lodgings. Anyway there was no great demand for the use of such articles just then. Hence the safest course was to deposit them in the dump. Not so with the more serviceable types of small arms - revolvers - and ammunition, which were often in requisition on sudden demand for one purpose or another. These latter were distributed among the men. A certain number of grenades were similarly distributed or placed in other dumps where they could be easily obtained for service. By these provisions we felt fairly secure.

About this time also a special dispatch service was inaugurated under G.H.Q. orders. The object of this was to maintain communication with outlying commands. Certain men were detailed for this cycle dispatch work, among them Charlie O'Hanlon and Frank Weafer of our Company. Such distant places as Clondalkin, Dunboyne and Maynooth were visited once or twice a week, as well as bearing dispatches in the city. This was very exacting and laborious work which called for speed, courage and ingenuity of no mean order. These men, together with a number of others of our Company - Joe McDonough, Peadar Meehan, Joe Musgrave,

James Finnerty, Jim Downey, Andy Birmingham and some others were attached to the Battalion Cyclist Section, a composite force which consisted of men from and of the various Companies. It had been formed not as a separate unit, but rather for the purpose of performing cyclist training and certain types of cyclist activities, such as, scouting and doing observation duty on barracks. None of the personnel attached thereto lost membership of their original Unit or Company in which they continued parading and drilling.

Over a good part of 1920, as on the previous year, General Headquarters from time to time issued orders to certain men of the Dublin Brigade not to sleep at home, as raids were expected to be made for their arrest. In consequence of this many officers of the Dublin Brigade had movable residences. Our Captain, Seán Flood, was one of these. Some others of us on an odd occasion had to do likewise. One of our men, Ned Dolan, had been assigned to the duty of communicating orders to that effect to various men in different parts of the city. Not infrequently these precautions were found to be unnecessary. Still we could not afford to run the risk of disobeying orders. One of the big difficulties was to obtain at a moment's notice shelter in a friendly atmosphere. One occasion I had to recourse to Ned Dolan's home on the Royal Canal, Phibsboro. Seán Flood was also there. He, it appears, was more than a casual there. When the danger passed over naturally one returned to normal ways of living. A very strange thing happened in the vicinity of the Dolans' home. One night as Ned was coming home he was attacked by a couple of men. Fortunately he escaped injury, though he was hard put to it to make good his

escape. Whether this had any connection with Seán Flood's temporary abode nearby we could not surmise, but many of us had the feeling that the attackers may have planned a show down or murder of himself or Dolan. For a few nights afterwards we had the place under observation but could not contact the would-be assailants. Another mystery that we were unable to solve was a strange letter that Seán Flood had received. It suggested that it would be to his interest to meet a friend at a particular date and time in Poplar Row. Seán took some of us into his confidence on the matter. We debated the question as to whether he should or should^{not} put in an appearance there, but finally decided against the course, fearing that it was a trap to assassinate him. It must be understood that during this period letters of a mysterious type, and some of them threatening death to the recipients, were in circulation and sent through the post to reputed men of the I.R.A. and Republican personages. There was every reason then for exercising caution and vigilance and to take every reasonable precaution for one's personal safety at a time when the agent provocateur and assassin, spy and informer, were straining every nerve to put the I.R.A. out of commission.

Evidence was not wanting to prove the existence of the agent provocateur. One instance of it was brought to light on the 16th September when the secret service agent, Hardy, was publicly exposed by Arthur Griffith. This man, tool of the British Intelligence Service, sought contact with Michael Collins for allegedly innocent reasons which were neither innocent

nor friendly. By a very clever ruse he was led, not into the presence of Collins, but rather before the august and highly sensitive presence of representatives of the public press. What an awful moment, a cruel blow and dynamic exposure for a man who, flushed with the prospect of achieving fame as an Intelligence officer, found himself face to face with his own evil and criminal past. His contribution to the defence and preservation of law and order suffered from the shock of the exposure, the impact of which must have been felt in Dublin Castle and Downing St. It brought home to the Irish people, as it also demonstrated to the I.R.A., that the British authorities were prepared to go to any extremes in order, as they so blatantly declared, "to destroy the forces of murder and lawlessness". Dublin became about this time the home and the refuge for a large force of British Intelligence Officers then living under assumed names in various hotels, guest houses and apartments. These fulfilled the duties of spies and were considered to be members of the British 'Murder Gang'.

The full significance of the presence and activity of that "Murder Gang" was illustrated by the perpetration of the slaying of Mr. O'Carroll of Manor St. One of his sons, Liam, was Adjutant of our (1st) Battalion; another, Peter, was a member of "A" Coy of the same Battalion. Not finding the boys at home, the "Murder Gang" struck at the father, and in doing so brought sorrow and desolation to a good and patriotic Irish family. This was but one of the many terrorist operations indulged in by the hidden forces of the Crown, many of whom wore civilian clothes and carried out the fell deeds under the cloak of complete

secrecy. Here was a menacing, a disturbing situation, which was aggravated by the information that people going home late at night were held up and searched by men considered to be members of the British armed forces who wore no uniform or insignia suggesting their membership of such forces.

Meanwhile the Dublin Brigade by means of operations that were diversified and consistent, showed no sign of slackening or singularly out-witting the innumerable hordes of touts, spies and agents and an occupational army and police force who were highly trained and skilled in pursuit of a settled policy of achieving victory to their arms. Some daring exploits were carried out by units or specially selected groups of I.R.A., which included the disarming of military policemen on College Green, the seizure of the mails from England to Dublin Castle, and the hold up and attempted disarming of a military convoy at Church St. This latter episode happened on the 20th September 1920 outside Monks' bakery, then situated between Nth. King St. and Lisburn St., a couple of hundred yards distance from a strong British garrison post at the Nth. Dublin Union. That military party, armed and in a motor lorry, had come from the Marlboro House, Glasnevin, to draw their customary supply of bread. The I.R.A. party that had come to carry out the coup to disarm them and seize their arms were drawn from H Coy 1st Battalion, under the command of their Capt., Seumas Kavanagh, and almost a score of other ranks. It appears the attackers were unable to effect surprise because of the preparedness and alertness of the military party. An almost pitched battle, sharp and furious, ensued. In the melee one of H Coy's members

was seen to be under the military lorry, apparently taking cover there from the crossfire between his friends and the British soldiers. He was unable to extricate himself from that precarious position. Some of his comrades who beheld him in that sorry plight could not render him any assistance as the British soldiers had by that time complete control of the situation. Besides, the allotted time for carrying out the operation had expired and the men were, in consequence, required to withdraw from the scene, for at any moment the British military at the North Dublin Union would put in an appearance.

Though not a member of H Coy, I and my companion Seán Kennedy were sufficiently in the confidence of some of its members to be aware previously of the operation. In view of that we made it our business to be conveniently situated in the neighbourhood in case we could be of assistance in getting any of the raiders safely away. As it was, we were of some use. The sound and intensity of the firing conveyed to our minds that some mishap had occurred. That was proved correct when eventually we met several of the men returning from the raid. No need to ask questions, for deep concern was on their faces. "The thing failed. Kevin is taken - he's a prisoner. Kevin is gone - captured" were the first words with which we were confronted. The failure of the attack was as nothing in comparison to the loss of their dear comrade Kevin Barry. His name was to be in our memory, in our conversations for a long, long time. To the members of his own Company he was a boy Volunteer, brave, jovial and endearing. Those of us who were fated to know him

on many a stunt were singularly gifted, for despite his youth he was the essence of manliness, full of daring, zest and vigour in a great cause. In the midst of the calamity that had befallen him, one's thoughts turned back through the few years of his service in the I.R.A., reflecting in particular on the first night he joined our Auxiliary Company, through several stages of training and later passing into "H", there to follow up the good work. One had only to be on the several jobs with him to appraise his worth, his courage, his constancy. He always wanted to do things requiring dash and initiative in any sphere of activity. In the short space of a few years he had been entrusted with many a task and a number of operations. The trust reposed in him was never abused, as those of us who had the good fortune to be associated with him on some of the activities can testify.

It was cruel to think of him a prisoner; to think that he could not make a bold bid to get away. Many strange stories were in circulation, some hinting that he was wounded and others that his gun got jammed. At the time we had no means of finding out how he got into such terrible difficulties. We could only surmise that something unforeseen occurred - something beyond his control must have happened to cause him to become a prisoner. It was beyond the power of his comrades to render any assistance, although some of them, when they became aware of his absence and his plight, offered to go back to rescue him, even at the peril of their own lives. But such would have been foolhardy, as the British Tommies had then charge of the situation and little time was available to continue a forlorn fight as at any moment the reserve of British troops

in immediate vicinity might appear on the scene. Greater sadness and desolation was to come to his comrades later when the British announced that Kevin Barry had been tried by courtmartial and sentenced to death - to be hanged on 1st November 1920. But between the date of the promulgation of the death sentence and the day of Kevin's execution, many strange and startling things were to happen within I.R.A. circles to give encouragement to the hope of effecting his escape. Plans were prepared by G.H.Q., transmitted to selected officers and men, and everything set in motion for what was considered the most daring and sensational rescue bid in I.R.A. history.

Mountjoy prison where Kevin Barry was incarcerated, was at that time a veritable military fortress, well and heavily guarded. It was known that Kevin Barry was under close observation and surveillance day and night. He was never alone or unguarded, even during the periods that were allotted for visitors. Notwithstanding these disabilities, and despite them, the urge to rescue him was strong, nay imperative. It was not surprising then that on Saturday afternoon the 30th October 1920, two days before the appointed date fixed for his execution, a selected group of men of the Dublin Brigade were mobilised. Meeting at the premises of the Irish Typographical and Printing Union in Lower Gardiner St., the aforesaid men, who were armed with revolvers and most of whom consisted of men of the 1st Battalion, included men of Kevin's Coy (H), such as - Tom O'Brien, Dave Golding etc., as well as Patrick Kirk, Jack Poole, Dinny Holmes and myself of C Coy. Holmes and I were not, however, picked for the

enterprise. Peadar Clancy, the Vice Brigadier, outlined the plan which we understood had the authority and approval of G.H.Q. That plan suggested cunning, boldness and daring. Briefly it consisted of a mere handful of trusted men to operate in pairs, most of whom were detailed to present themselves during visiting hours outside the gate at Mountjoy Jail. Many intending visitors would, it was presumed, be congregated there, and, in consequence, a few men here and there might not cause any undue suspicion that a project for Kevin's rescue was afoot. One or two of our men were to seek entrance with a relative or relation of Kevin Barry. The plan presupposed that these would be admitted. It was known that each prisoner was allowed a certain number of minutes for conversing with visitors. Kevin meanwhile was to be informed of the rescue plan; his co-operation was essential for the success of the undertaking. He may or may not have had prior knowledge of that.

At a certain fixed time another of the party at the jail entrance were to seek admission as prospective visitors. It was incumbent on them to get inside the gate, to engage the attention of the governor, and, by means of a ruse, ask permission to visit some supposed prisoner. The Governor, it was assumed, would have been involved in an argument on the matter of the physical presence of, shall we say, Prisoner X, and naturally as a good efficient governor, by means of interrogation etc. go to at least a little trouble to prove that no such prisoner was incarcerated there. At this stage, which was in fact the most important part of the work, he was to be stuck up and the gate keys taken from him. Reference must be made here of

The
/existence of another entrance to the prison proper of which the main door was but an subsidiary. The latter consisted of a huge heavy iron double gateway which led into an arch, at the end of which stood a grilled railed gate. Small wicket doors were situated in both. These were in use for admitting visitors.

Having overpowered the governor and guard, assuming there were such, the plan of rescue rested on the assumption that everything had gone right at the other end - inside the place reserved for visiting. Kevin, supported by his accomplice, would then have been on the move making for the aforementioned gateway. While these things were happening the other couple of men outside would be on the alert by providing protection and generally backing up the efforts of their comrades more proximate to the danger zone. The whole project up to this depended on the element of surprise, speed and sheer good luck. Not the least difficulty with which the men engaged in it were concerned was the danger that during the period of holding up the Governor or taking possession of the jail entrances, the alarm would be raised. Our men in the archway would be under view, as even Peadar Clancy had explained the likelihood that that armed British sentries were posted overlooking that point. If their curiosity was not aroused all would go well, but this depended on a big IF which the men readily understood would be the case. The main consideration was to get Kevin across the jail grounds to the entrance or exit, a distance of a good fifty yards. Everyone knew that once he (Kevin) got going nothing short of bullets would stop him to get outside into God's daylight and liberty.

Another portion of the plan was to rush Kevin along the avenue that led to the prison on to the public thoroughfare at the North Circular Road to a motor car that was waiting with engine throbbing at the corner of Goldsmith St., adjacent to Blacquiere Bridge, where two trusted I.R.A. men, Dave Golding, the driver, and Jack Poole, both of them armed, were posted for his coming. Then he was to be conveyed to an undisclosed destination, some of the men to accompany him there.

That was the bold plan. Charlie Byrne, an officer of the 1st Battalion, was given the task of commanding the party so detailed. All and each of those men were prepared to sell their lives dearly to liberate their beloved comrade. They realised that it was going to be a difficult proposition to carry out that operation successfully. Previous to the final detailing of orders, those of us who had been "turned down" or otherwise debarred from participating in the enterprise, had left the meeting place. But we knew enough of the plans to convince us of their importance. Not through any idle curiosity, Dinny Holmes and myself wended our way in the direction of the prison - or rather a very safe distance away - at Blacquiere Bridge, Phibsboro". To our surprise, Tom Byrne who was Commandant of the 1st Battalion, was also there. We paid him no attention. Perhaps he had some particular mission there; perhaps he, like us, was anxious to help in some out of the way fashion. After a short period of time we learned that the rescue attempt was called off. Later the information was forthcoming that the relatives prevailed against our men making the attempt. There were even rumours that Kevin might be reprieved because of his youth.

One thing stood out very clearly; the men who had gone on that undertaking, and had actually taken up their positions at the prison entrance and in its vicinity, felt cheated from doing something for their comrade - Kevin Barry - and disappointed that their plans were not put into operation. They each and all had a quiet sense of optimism of accomplishing their purpose. The abandonment of the project was very keenly felt by them, but under the particular circumstances it was quite unavoidable. Disappointment, dejection and sorrow overcame them as they came away from the prison haunted by the cruel bitter thought of the approaching doom of their beloved comrade.

As has already been mentioned, there was an air of expectancy in some quarters that the British Government might at the last moment exercise clemency on behalf of Kevin. Many good meaning people felt and expressed the hope, nay the probability, of such a prerogative of mercy being granted. There was no apparent ground for such hope, nothing beyond wishful thinking to indicate any change of heart on the part of those whose purpose it was to restore law and order in Ireland, a process and a policy that sought to destroy types like Kevin Barry for daring to contest their authority to rule Ireland in the British interests. One thing stood out crystal clear, and that was that the British authorities showed no sign of wavering on such an issue of clemency. They were prepared to show a bold front in the face of the determined opposition of the I.R.A. and the Irish race to their rule and their authority. On the reverse side of the picture there were many people who would not take a hazard on

or bring themselves to the point of anticipating the abandonment of the execution. Of that number were included Kevin's own comrades, the officers and men of the Dublin Brigade and G.H.Q. of the I.R.A., who, though suffering a set-back on the failure of the first attempt at rescue, sought to make another and an equally daring and desperate effort.

Hence on the following day (Sunday) a group of men were mobilised, assembling in a house in Nth. Great George's St. Among that group were members of Kevin's Company (H), two members of C Company - Frank Carberry and Dinny McGrane and others. Not being one of that party I knew not the plans beyond the consciousness that another attempt was to be made. It was not, however, gone on with, and the men who had waited for a considerable time for the order that would have put them into action were dismissed. The second try failed. It looked as if mischance or misfortune were playing a major part in thwarting the efforts of the men who planned and those who sought to carry out the plan of liberation.

Obviously the word "finis" was not uttered or expressed by the I.R.A. authorities, for during the next few hours a certain trend of activity was started. A special urgent mobilisation of various Companies of the Dublin Brigade was ordered. Each such unit was ordered to parade their men that night. These were to be armed with revolvers - grenades were to be available and distributed to selected men. Nearly all the members of our Company (C) paraded at Wilson's, Nth. Frederick St. Our Captain, Seán Flood, as per orders, reported to G.H.Q. for receipt of final instructions

of the rescue plan. Amid a scene of great animation, excitement and expectancy we awaited the return of our Captain, in the meantime paying just attention to our stock of munitions, seeing that the revolvers were in good condition, attending to each individual supply of ammunition and preparing the grenades for action. All these occupied our time fully. Our Q.M., Charlie Murphy, had more than his share of work in this respect. With assistance from the other officers and N.C.O.s the business of demand and supply was expeditiously arranged.

We had enough sense to realise that this was to be the rescue - this the big effort. Our part in the operation was unfolded by our Captain. It consisted of holding an area from the corners of Nth. Circular Road - Berkeley Road to Leo St. and behind to Eccles St. and laneway that was situated below the Mater Hospital and ran into Dorset St. Other units, too, had allotted tasks. In all, several hundreds of men were to be employed on the operation, and what an operation it was intended to be! A select group of men picked from the 5th Engineers' Battalion had detailed orders to blast, by means of explosives, one of the walls of the prison. By this means entrance to the prison proper was to be effected, to secure Kevin and bring him to safety. No bolder, no more desperate plan could be devised. Every point had, we understood, been carefully considered; every man and every unit requisitioned for the operation was made aware of the rescue plan. One of the weakest points in the projected plan was the large number of men required. To employ less would apparently prove ineffective.

Yet the fact of the assembly of a few hundred men in the neighbourhood did not suggest that we were going about this business in the way in which we were accustomed. The whole affair resembled, or was liable to be construed as a miniature uprising. Desperate ills require desperate remedies; that sufficed for the employment of such large numbers of men, each to operate on a well chosen and properly arranged plan of action.

It so happened that our Company, detailed in the fashion already described, had been entrusted with the task of keeping watch and ward at points leading to the front entrance to the prison - to afford protection and to deal with enemy forces coming on the scene of operation. We could safely estimate that that would be their first re-action supposing news of our assembly or of the actual operation reached them. We also were required to afford cover for the men actually engaged in carrying out the rescue proper, as well as supporting other groups on our flanks or in the immediate neighbourhood. Quite a heap of difficulties could be anticipated, not the least of which was the likelihood, even the proximate possibility that the presence of such a great number of men so convenient to the prison might be spotted, with disastrous results for the men and the proposed rescue. In order to reduce to a minimum such a contingency occurring, we had planned on the principle of keeping low by using our men in small groups at likely danger points. Some, we knew, would have to be in the streets, but plans had been prepared to post some at unobtrusive places inside the walls of the Mater Hospital and stretched along the Nth. Circular Road in front of the main prison entrance

and others in Eccles Lane.

More than an hour had elapsed since the time of our assembly in Wilson's, and we were awaiting the return of our Captain with orders from our G.H.Q. to go into action. The suspense was terrific, unnerving if not totally unbearable. Were it not for the almost good humour and enthusiasm of our men, and the scene of activity and fuss, we might have got on edges. Time flagged on. At last Séán arrived. The expected moment had come. The Company was called to attention and Séán, our beloved Captain, with visible signs of emotion and tears in his eyes exclaimed: "The job has been called off". Called off. How? Why?!. The effect which this announcement had on the men was indescribable, stunning, startling. They took it in deadly silence, each of them looking stupified, spellbound by the awful failure to stop the terrible tragedy which Kevin's execution on the morrow portended. Disappointed, disgusted and sore they were. "Headquarters called it off" Séán announced. When the silence was broken many a tear was shed. Many a word of sorrow and pity was expressed for poor Kevin Barry - and the common understanding was now that nothing short of a miracle could save him from his fate.

Séán Flood, our Captain, also told us, as if in answer to the question that lay heavy on every man's mind 'why the cancellation of the rescue plans?', that there was unusual activity on the part of the British forces in the neighbourhood of the prison that night. Even while we were assembled in Wilson's waiting to take up position, several lorry loads of Crown forces passed by going in that direction. We had no means of

knowing the character or purpose of their activities. If fate played tricks on us in frustrating our efforts in this sad business, it showed no great unkindness in saving us from much suffering and sacrifice on that occasion. Had we been on duty in the vicinity of the 'Joy' our seemingly large numbers might have been scant, indeed totally inadequate to succeed in the planned operation and deal with the large forces that the British could bring against us. Once they became aware that something was in the air we would have to face a very grave situation, and possibly have to pay a big price whether the operation was successful or otherwise. Besides, we were not fitted, from the point of view of armaments, to overpower them or even hold them in check for a lengthy period. Yet we could not escape the thought - had we been so placed and the operation got underway, we should have had no other choice but to render an account of ourselves. Then it would be a case of doing our best to attain our object.

We officers had no doubt in our minds but that the men, each and all of them, were sufficiently brave, enthusiastic and determined in the face of the dangers and difficulties that were liable to accrue from their action in trying to rescue their comrade from the veritable brink of the scaffold. To many of them that operation would have been their first, the real test of armed service, of being on a big job, and, perhaps, the first time they would have to use gun or grenade or come under fire. All were eager and willing for the chance to prove themselves in an undertaking of this sort, even with the odds against them. Denial of the chance to assert themselves made them bitter, sad and

disappointed; none the less so because what seemed the last opportunity to rescue Kevin had passed and we had no other recourse but to await the passage of time when - oh, the cruel thought of it - he the young, gay and valiant one would inevitably pass into eternity, a memory and a symbol of resurgent Ireland. If, perchance we riled against the cancellation of the rescue plans, and for being so cruelly robbed of the chance of attaining our object, we had reason to apprehend and appreciate that nothing short of overpowering strength and preparedness on the part of our enemies would have caused our Headquarters to abandon the enterprise. We had cause to bear our humiliation, our sorrow and failure in no less a philosophical manner as those in higher ranks had to bear theirs.

Fortune seemed to favour the British on that occasion - that and a substantial measure of good luck. Had they information that we were on the move and prepared to make our big effort? Who could tell? Their presence, their activities and movements in the immediate vicinity of the prison may or may not have had any relation with or bearing on the projected rescue plan fostered by the I.R.A. At the time such manifestation of armed might could be taken to indicate that if they were not actually aware of such activities on our part, they were seeking by the exercise of precautionary or protective measures to guard against any contingency that might be liable to arise on the eve of the execution. Their show of strength could as easily have been attributable to the demonstration of the fact that they were masters of the situation and in accord with the military conception of taking nothing,

for granted - and granting nothing - at a time when anything could happen to militate against the agencies of law and order. Perhaps such activities on their part were more co-incidental, just ordinary patrol movements, than those with which we had become accustomed, though, as far as could be perceived, on a far bigger scale. Some such activities were normally carried out to and from the prison, more by way of military routine duties, for purposes connected with the garrisoning, supervision and maintenance of the guards stationed there. Why then attach over-rated importance to their movements on that particular night, or even assume that such activities related to their prior knowledge that the I.R.A. were planning to effect the rescue of Kevin Barry.

The next few hours were sad and anxious ones for Kevin's friends. Many an I.R.A. man, in sorrow and trepidation, as well as in anger and disgust, felt crushed by the cruel ordinance that aimed at terminating a brave young life. Nothing, apparently, could be done to save him from the awful doom that awaited him. On that fateful November morning the nationally minded and patriotically inclined citizens of Dublin vied with the officers and men of the Dublin Brigade in paying homage and respect to or on behalf of "poor Kevin Barry". Long before the hour fixed for the execution, hundreds of people, men and women, assembled outside the Mountjoy bastille in the avenue and road connected therewith, making the rounds of Mary's Rosary, and in other pious exercises offering prayerful supplication for his spiritual welfare. In the nearby churches large congregations engaged in the Holy Sacrifice or made visitations to offer a humble prayer or

ejaculation for the same purpose. In this way many of us who found ourselves in the vicinity of the prison, or those otherwise engaged, united with the sacrificial act of our dear comrade.

In executing Kevin Barry the British government added one more martyr to the long scroll of Ireland's glorious dead. His death, perhaps more than his life, proved his worth, his faith and his principles. His was the noble life, the manly part which even a felon's death could neither besmirch or destroy. If there was any consolation in his tragic passing from this vale of tears, it was to be found in the happy thought that he would die gladly and nobly with the courage of his race, and that he would go with soul undaunted to his doom. His Volunteer instinct, his Volunteer training and his Volunteer pride could essay no other consumation to a life that had served Ireland so well and so bravely. He who could pen the words: "Fight on! Live on! Live on for the ideals for which I am about to die" was no less brave than the man called Pearse, the Manchester three, Tone, Emmet and all the brave heroes who "in spite of dungeon, fire and sword" proved their manliness and their sacrifice. We salute you Kevin, in tears, in prayers and in praise for your life among us and for your passing away. We shall miss your comradeship, your gaiety and the measure of your service in our good cause. May we be no less true, no less brave than you whatever the prize and whatever the course to be run were the thoughts subscribed by many of his comrades.

His death caused a void in our ranks and produced a wonderful effect on our movement. Around his heroic

sacrifice the songster and the ballad singer weaved the story of his life, of his service as a Volunteer and his glorious death. Ballad sheets were printed in laudation of "Kevin Barry" and sold in the tens of thousands - not merely sold, but sung at all times and in all places. The young people, particularly, fell prey to the strain of the ballad or song. One of these became quite commonplace for it depicted him:

"Only a lad of eighteen summers
 And there's no one can deny
 Kevin Barry-gave his young life
 For the cause of Liberty".

Another composition entitled "The prison grave of Kevin Barry", printed and published from the "Gaelic Press" (proprietor Joe Stanley) was more expressive of the fame and memory of the martyr: It ran:

"He is dead to-day, and the cold, cold clay
 Of a prison grave-yard sleeps.

Chapter 17.

In the sequence of events associated with the capture, the imprisonment and execution of Kevin Barry, time had been stripped by almost six weeks. During that period many things had occurred in the political and military sphere to give semblance to the idea that a state of guerilla warfare and its concomitant attributes prevailed over a large portion of Ireland. Events towards the latter part of September were more startling than at any previous occasions. Such highlights as the sacking and wrecking of Balbriggan, the murder of Seán Lynch at Exchange Hotel in Parliament St., the wrecking of Carrick-on-Shannon and Tuam, the burning of Mallow, in each case by the Crown forces,

epitomised the carrying out of a reprisal policy by and with the authority of the British government. Many other activities, also of a sensational nature, were recorded: Republicans murdered in Belfast, the ambushes by I.R.A. at Kanturk and Roscommon etc. Then on the 13th October 1920 the raid by British forces on Professor Carolan's house at Fernside, Upr. Drumcondra took place for the purpose of capturing the illusive and intrepid Volunteer leaders - Dan Breen and Seán Treacy. That raid cost the loss of some British officers, the death of Professor Carolan and the escape of the much wanted men, Breen and Treacy, both of whom were wounded, the former seriously. These men had been 'on the run' for a considerable period, due to their guerilla exploits in their native Tipperary, and innumerable attempts had been made to apprehend them, a large sum of money being offered for their capture.

The newspapers of the following day gave sensational and graphic accounts of the raid and of the running fight that ensued. The main concern among I.R.A. circles was that the 'birds had flown'. One could not help feeling apprehensive on the score that they had been tracked to their lair and had only escaped capture by sheer good fortune, fighting their way to safety. The affair had set the machinery at the disposal of the British forces into full gear, and in a few hours time set into motion a full cycle of events and activities as alarming and exciting as the exploits at Fernside.

On the following morning (14/10/'20) the British forces made a descent on and conducted a raid on the Mater Hospital. That move was to be the forerunner of startling and indeed tragic happenings, involving

certain categories and personages of the I.R.A. in Dublin with the cross current of events that had their origin in the raid and shootings of the previous night. It was a strange, inexplicably strange, fate that led me into the presence of Brigadier Dick McKee that morning - the 14th October. Meeting him in O'Connell St. and replying negatively to the question as to whether I was doing anything special, he requested me to go to the Mater Hospital where, he informed me, a big raid was going on. He enjoined me to keep a sharp look out on what they were doing, and also instructed me to obtain the service of any Volunteer that might be in the vicinity. I was told to keep him informed. Messages were to be sent to him at Brennan and Walsh's shop, 5 Upr. O'Connell St., which was owned by Maurice Brennan and Tom Walsh. I readily sensed that something out of the ordinary was taking place, but its full significance was not brought home to me until a few minutes afterwards, when, arriving in close proximity to the Mater Hospital I was face to face with the Crown forces then engaged in their work of raiding. Fortunately I was not long there when I came across a few Volunteers of whom I was well acquainted - Seán Brunswick, Bertie Ryan, both of F Coy, and Mick Douglas of G Coy 1st Battalion. It didn't require much talk or persuasion to obtain their help and co-operation.

We noticed that the Crown forces had the approaches to the Mater well and sufficiently guarded and they formed a complete cordon of the area, while armoured cars were continually patrolling the streets and some of them occupied important points therein. Selecting a suitable position at the corner of Sarsfield

Street and Berkeley Road, I was enabled to keep the main entrance of the Mater under observation while the other Volunteers moved contiguous to the cordon of soldiers and likewise watched the movements associated with the raid. We obtained quite an amount of information thereby, every important item of which was duly conveyed by means of cycle despatch to our Brigadier. One spicy bit of information related to the raiding party not being hospitably received and, in consequence, suffered a rebuff temporarily, because there was not enough dash and force in them to cause them to proceed with their business. Our main concern was to find out if they made any captures. Actually we feared for the safety of Dan Breen and his companion Treacy, and every hour that passed seemed to add to the apprehension we felt - that one or both of them would fall into the raiders' hands.

After making several journeys to Brigadier McKee, who, in the meantime, had moved to Peadar Clancy's shop (The Republican Outfitters) in Talbot St., one of the despatch bearers brought back news that an attempt would be made to ambush the Crown forces on their return from the scene of the raid. Preparations were well in hands, and a special hurried mobilisation had been issued for selected men for the ambush party and, as the bearer of the information stated, there was great activity at Peadar's shop. A request was made to us to arm ourselves and to hold ourselves in readiness for further orders.

These further orders never arrived. Neither did the prospective ambush take effect. After a protracted raid, lasting several hours, the British raiding party prepared to leave the Mater and its vicinity without

captures. Any moment something might happen; but no, other information was conveyed to us of a not too pleasant or agreeable nature - that terrible things had happened in Talbot St. resulting from a raid carried out by British troops on Clancy's shop. Shooting had ensued, and the information conveyed to us indicated that at least one I.R.A. man was killed. Poor Seán Treacy was slain, fighting to the last. There were also casualties on the British side, apparently caused by Treacy who conducted a lone combat in seeking to make good his escape.

Seán Brunswick, dispatch bearer from our group at the Mater, had come on the scene simultaneous with the arrival of the British forces in Talbot St. He had been caught in the midst of the affray, witnessed the ensuing fight, the death of Treacy and the withdrawal of the raiding party. These bore Treacy's body away, also took two or three of our prominent I.R.A. leaders as prisoners. Of Peadar Clancy and Dick McKee, our Vice Brigadier and Brigadier respectively, very little information could be obtained, except the merest surmise that they, by some means or other, got away - eluding the British soldiers in the early stages of the raid or during the turmoil caused by the shooting.

Indications were that that raid on the Republican Outfitters' shop nipped in the bud the preparations for the proposed ambush of British troops returning from the Mater Hospital. Contiguous with that raid was raised the query: "Did the British suspect that some such move was afoot? Or was it mere coincidence that they should appear at such a moment? It was hard to conjecture at the time, if the raid had any more

significance than any other raid that had been carried out on the premises from time to time. The nearest one could go to solve the clue was the possibility that the shop was under close observation by English secret service men that day, as it ever was. The shooting at Drumcondra on the previous night had caused the British to be vigilant and, assuming that the spotters were on the job, the coming and going of men through the doors of the shop in Talbot St. may have afforded evidence of more than usual trading there. To the trained sensitive eye of an intelligence agent, such unusual activity at such a venue was, to say the least, suspicious; even some of the men making calls on the shop may have been suspicious and, perhaps, known to be so. We who were engaged a mile or so away from Talbot St., on a task that was gradually being dovetailed into a large scale operation, surmised that the raid there related to the plans for mobilising I.R.A. men for the projected ambush. Unfortunately, too much use was made of the Republican Outfitters as a rendezvous for the purpose.

We were aware that the plans for the ambush were well under way. Men were being prepared for it. This was never an easy matter for the I.R.A. then. Such men and material were not requisitioned or available by the pressing of a bell or the blowing of a trumpet. They had to be located, in perhaps various parts of the city, brought to a selected venue and, after being instructed in the nature of the job, sent to the respective zone of intended action. That entailed much trouble, time and energy. Yet it would hardly be otherwise in an army like ours, that was neither full time nor fully fledged plying the soldiers trade. Hence the several handicaps to which we were addicted, and, in particular,

the difficulties of bringing men into action as on that day in October.

Whatever the reasonings on the question connected with the raid on the Republican Outfitters, one silent fact emerged, and that was, such a move prevented the carrying out of the ambush. The more one thought of it, the more convincing did it appear that the movements of the men at, and the activities connected with that shop may have put the British authorities wise, whether the outcome of chance, by design or only coincidental, to the point of taking some kind of appropriate action against them. Their raid on the occasion may have been an ordinary one. Yet there was something in it to indicate that it was a move to get at certain, if not all, the men then on the premises and to arrest them. That was how many of us who were conversant with events that day viewed it, and not without good solid reason or careful deduction. The sad painful sequel to the raid - the death of Treacy, under such tragic circumstances seemed to provide adequate confirmation that the presence of such a large number of prominent men of the I.R.A., or certain individuals of them, was for no good purpose, and so presented a favourable opportunity for some move like that to be made by the British to overcome them. Perhaps we could be pardoned for clinging to the idea that the whole episode was mystifying, of which there remained nothing but a mystery.

Coming down town later when the British forces had vacated the Mater and all chance of making any attack on them had vanished, we learned quite a lot of news. Dick McKee, Peadar Clancy and others had escaped, rather miraculously. There was great

animation and excitement among the populace in Talbot St then. All the talk was on "the poor man that was killed" - Seán Treacy, the indomitable brave fighter and soldier of the Irish Republic. He died as he had lived - fighting - and according to Seán Brunswick who was a witness of the fighting, he gallantly fought till death. His name and fame, allied to that of Dan Breen, had become cherished as much in the Dublin Brigade as in their own beloved Tipperary Brigade. Death, cruel inscrutable death had ruthlessly broken a physical and earthly link between them; the death of one and the serious wounding of the other had closed part of the chapter of adventure, exploits and activities associated with these men, leaving one to be mourned for a great loss and the other to mourn a sad loss of a dear comrade.

During that period under review Ireland's cause was being fought out within the lone drear cell of an English convict prison. The Irish people, at home or abroad, had their eyes steadfastly fixed on the enduring agony and proffered martyrdom of Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, as he pursued his prolonged feat in profession of his Republican faith and principles and in bitter protestation against British rule in Ireland. Arrested on 12th August 1920, he had been brought to trial on the 16th, sentenced and consigned to Brixton jail and on the 25th October he died. In his martyrdom MacSwiney portrayed all that was noblest, all that was real and all that was true in Ireland's inherent right to freedom. He proved the wisdom, the greatness and the grandeur of the principles of freedom which he propounded, wrote and advocated. Had he not declared - and in his declaration patriotically affirmed - as a maxim of national faith

and national devotion:

"It is not to those who inflict the most, but to those who endure the most that victory will be won".

There was a sublime heroism in the long drawn-out endurance of one who was a veritable incarnation of endurance, of an endurance that had to be borne every minute, every hour and every day of that fast, far away from the comfort and the comforting care and folds of his loved ones, far away from the land he loved but too well. Only the physical presence and the spiritual ministrations of his beloved friend and confessor, Father Dominic, contributed to mitigate the agonies, the sufferings and torments to which people undergoing the pangs of hunger-striking are heirs.

The world had looked on - much of it in wonder and admiration at the sacrifice offering, the martyrdom and the tragedy of Brixton jail. In all parts of the globe, wherever Irish men or Irish women were to be found, few there were who did not shed a tear and offer a prayer for "Terry". Even in the land of the stranger in England itself and in the various parts of the British Empire, there were Irish people, English people and those of other races who lamented the passing of that brave hero. His sacrifice stirred up deep emotions in the hearts of liberty-loving people everywhere, and brought the name of Ireland to every clime, every sphere and among the nations as perhaps no other episode or event ever succeeded in doing heretofore. Terence MacSwiney in life was the embodiment of the undying unquenchable spirit of freedom and the will to be free. His martyrdom testified that he was an untameable and

unconquerable Gael. The effect produced by the consummation of that drama of suffering among the Irish people at home was truly exemplary, inspiring and edifying.

Truly the national conscience was stirred as never before - stirred even to greater depths of emotion and pride than that produced by the death of Tomás Ashe - the first I.R.A. man to accept martyrdom by hunger-striking. Like Ashe, Terence MacSwiney's weakness symbolised Ireland's strength. The movement for independence, and all it represented and contained, grew in popularity, favour and prestige as much as (and on account of) the pursuance of hunger striking as a weapon of warfare against English rule. Indeed, the fight for freedom then being waged in Ireland stepped a pace further and received added stimulation by the fight and sacrifice of MacSwiney in Brixton, England. That fight was conducted by various methods, diverse ways and strange phases in which hunger-strikes, jail escapes, ambushing, boycotting and innumerable forms of guerilla tactics each played a part in a systematic plan of campaign. It was always a fight of sorts in which an individual, a few people or a group were engaged for some set purpose. The Irish people, the majority of whom formed the Republican cause, were at the time in sore distress and sad bereavement at the loss of MacSwiney; the I.R.A. no less distressed and bereaved accepted his death as a token sign of service and sacrifice, being highly edified and inspired thereby, accepting it as the price that had to be paid in the cause of liberty.

It was the price which the policy of the British

government encouraged; it was the price the British government extracted in its insensate and insensible policy to drown the desires of the Irish people struggling to be free. It sought to beat the I.R.A. through the self-imposed fasting and emaciated form of MacSwiney. It had shown a firm hand in governing Ireland, had pursued a strong policy to beat the 'Murder Gang' - to wit the I.R.A. - and in so doing produced a second Murder Gang of its own design and under its own aegis, which begot murder, arson and many other abnoxious acts, and by its very firmness and harshness made MacSwiney and others great in the eyes of the Irish people.

It refused to show leniency, preferring to accept the unequal combat of the lone hunger-striker in Brixton, and deemed itself incapable, as it was unwilling to temper justice with mercy. By that very act of omission or commission, the British government brought home to the people of Ireland, to the Irish race everywhere and the I.R.A. particularly, the wisdom of MacSwiney - that victory was to those ^{who} endured most and not to those who inflicted most.

Even in death MacSwiney was no less great and no less dangerous than in life, and the British government, still pursuing its strong policy, forbade the mortal remains of the martyr of Brixton to pass in funeral procession to Dublin. The ship that bore him was directed, on the orders of the British government, direct to Cork rather than, as had been arranged, calling at Dublin. In this way the larger portion of the Irish people were precluded from paying him fitting and appropriate honours, honours that would have done

justice to the memory of a great Irish patriot and would have demonstrated the strength and solidarity of Ireland. Obviously the British were in no mood for a large scale demonstration - as the journey from Dublin to Cork would afford. However, Ireland was represented at the funeral in Cork. Large contingents of the I.R.A. from various parts of Ireland, some of them dressed in the uniform forbidden by the British, marched in the cortege, vying with members of the Dail, religions, members of the public bodies, the professions, trades, associations, national educational and cultural organisations. No monarch could have received such funeral honours.

November 1920 was destined to be a fateful eventful month. In the country the operations of the I.R.A. Flying Columns were operating on a wide scale, so much so that on the 2nd it could be reported that ambushes took place in 20 counties. Murders, too, of many I.R.A. men were committed by Crown forces, a number of them in Co. Kerry. Then came the report of the murder of Father Griffin of Galway, committed on the 15th, a deed that went far to shock the religious and national conscience in Ireland, as it brought home to British administration the full import of a cruel and dastardly reprisal policy. Even decent public spirited Englishmen were to be found to condemn a policy that produced such heinous wicket crimes. That such things could be, and were done, was ample proof that only rule by the gun was possible, and English governmental chiefs, amongst them the then Chief Secretary of Ireland, Sir Hamar Greenwood, accepted it as a natural course to restore law and order in a country in which such a state of affairs existed as to call for force and still more

force all the time. One thing he and those who backed up, connived at and encouraged assassinations failed to grasp - that the perpetration of such deeds only strengthened the resolve of the men of the I.R.A. to continue the fight. No other course was possible or feasible.

Dublin, though escaping much of the ravishes and abominations of the reprisal policy, was none the less, so to speak, in the news. Certain important things were happening in the Dublin Brigade. One of these was the formation of the Squad - a full time force operating directly under G.H.Q. orders and control. Another was the intensification of the duties of patrolling (in operation for a considerable period) which had been stepped up considerably in recent months. These functions had been normally carried out by Companies, while no time was lost in training our men in the use of revolver and grenade, and the detailing of men on such work as intelligence and observation duties. These latter consisted of seeking information of people known or suspected of helping the British, seeking information of places and things inhabited or used by British agents, noting their movements, customs and characteristics and reporting same to Headquarters. While on this point it may be necessary to mention that according to the scheme of organisation a system of intelligence was considered of vital importance. So much so that each Battalion was required to appoint what became known as a Battalion Intelligence Officer, whose especial duty it was to deal with all matters appertaining to that important branch of military work, assisted by the Companies.

The armistice celebrations on the 11th November 1920 gave the pro-British element another opportunity to give vent to their Imperial feelings. Dublin was again the scene of great excitement. On that day some of us were on duty at various national halls, and that night patrolled the central parts of Dublin. These celebrations generally led to wild scenes, baton charges, and not infrequently to attacks on Republicans or property owned by Republicans. The presence and use of the Volunteers on defensive duty on such occasions minimized, if not prevented, such wild demonstrations from becoming too distinctly anti-Irish, and prevented the orgies from having greater sway than the wild 'uns wished for.

Then came 20th November. That night and the early hours of the 21st was the occasion for startling and sensational events. A large number of British Secret Agents were shot by orders of the I.R.A. Executive. These agents were special military intelligence personnel, most of whom, if not all, were former British Army Officers specially selected for the most onerous and dangerous work of collecting and reporting information concerning the I.R.A. and I.R.A. activity. Heretofore such work had been performed in Dublin by members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and detectives connected therewith. Many of these had been shot for engaging in such work, only those escaping who were not regarded by the I.R.A. as doing political work. Ordinary police work was carried on in a more or less routine manner by day, though generally speaking, by means of the curfew regulations, the military authorities governed by night. The British authorities in instituting the special intelligence service sought

to recover old ground by placing the men outside the precincts of barracks, where like ordinary citizens they could live, move and have their being freely and without sufferance.. They could not fail to appreciate the risks they were running. Undoubtedly it was a serious threat to the existence and working of the I.R.A. The destruction of many of these Intelligence Officers over a wide area of Dublin effected in a large measure the full exploitation of that system of espionage, and caused the Castle authorities to return to the previous order of things by controlling it and conducting it from the barracks.

The shooting of those Intelligence Officers produced other reactions. One was the arrest by Crown forces of our Brigadier and Vice Brigadier, Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy, and with them Conor Clune, all of whom were taken prisoners in a house in Gloucester St. They were conveyed to Dublin Castle. It was unfortunate that their arrests should coincide with the shootings of the Intelligence Officers. Then on the 22nd came the report that the three had been shot while trying to escape, but it was generally believed by I.R.A. men that they were murdered because information crept out from that citadel of infamy that they had been brutally and savagely treated. Evidence of this was visible on their bodies which were handed over for burial later. Sorrow for their suffering was no less poignant than sorrow for their loss, which was regarded as the biggest blow the Dublin Brigade had received since 1916. We thereby lost two of our best Commanders, Dick and Peadar, (this was how they were affectionately called by the men of the Dublin Brigade) who had borne

the brunt of many hard times and many daring exploits since the Volunteer movement was initiated. Both had served in the Rising and had since risen to the height of eminence in the movement. They might have been twin brothers, so closely matched and so akin were they in many characteristics and ways. Under their leadership the Dublin Brigade progressed enormously, each of them contributing a personal share in its workings and activities, organisational and operational plans, and every matter that called for ingenuity, dash and vigour.

No wonder then that we of the Dublin Brigade who knew and respected these men, reeled under the cruel blow and felt its full weight and impact, showing evidence of our sorrow and our desolation. Would the Brigade withstand the shock, the terrific blow, the cruel loss engendered by the deaths of two great and noble men? It was a most bitter trial; an equally severe ordeal pregnant with grave possibilities and potential dangers. Whatever the outcome of the struggle in which we were engaged, one thing was certain - the Dublin Brigade would miss and mourn the loss of Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy.

(Dick McKee was 28 years of age. He took part in the Rising, was interned at Frongoch and later served a term in Mountjoy. He was a man of fine physique, active, and standing over 6 feet tall.

Peadar Clancy had taken part in the great hunger-strike in April 1920 while undergoing sentence in Mountjoy Prison. He was released with the others who were sent to various city hospitals).

It took the Dublin Brigade sometime to recover from that blow. It must not be inferred from this

that it sat down during the time. It would be wrong to convey such an impression, much less to hint such a thing. The transition between the deaths of these two officers and the appointment of their successors, was a time of great travail and of strange difficulties for the Dublin Brigade. Many there were who doubted whether the Brigade would be able to right itself from the shock, or even replace their loss of the two foremost men. To give way to the one, or to neglect the other course, tended to fall into the British plan to destroy our movement. Each would be contrary to their wishes and would, in any event, have been inexcusable blunder at a time in our history. Consequently, successors were appointed to their positions - Oscar Traynor as Brigadier and Seán Mooney as Vice Brigadier.

The other reaction to the shooting of the British Intelligence Officers was the cold blooded massacre of unarmed harmless citizens attending a Gaelic football match at Croke Park. The British authorities showed their hand by that savage, vindictive and unwarranted action. The wild orgy of descending in warlike array, and by way of a punitive expedition to "shoot up" a peaceful and happy gathering of citizens, players and spectators alike, and by opening destructive fire on them with revolver, rifle and machine guns, was a poor method of getting their own back for the loss of their fallen comrades. It was a sad reflection on the custodians of law and order that they should select an occasion like that to vent spite and spleen against people who were only engaged in a game of sport. Here we saw members of the Crown forces at their worst.

The match was only a short time in progress when a British aeroplane flew over and encircled the pitch. Then, as if from nowhere, came the surging mass of Auxiliaries through the gate entrances, bursting their way through the spectators, shooting as they came. Soon the people scattered in all directions amid the din caused by the stampede and accelerated by the sound of machine gun fire which resembled a miniature battle. It was my lot to be a witness of the initial stages of the British attack. Situated on a small rise of ground from which the canal entrance and the bridge at Jones's Road were in view, I and a few companions, Dinny Holmes, Paddy Kirk, Bob Kirk, Seán Nathan and Frank Carberry, beheld the Auxies approach and found ourselves in the field of fire. We were unarmed, and were only present for the sake of the game.

Sweeping all before them, the Auxies came uncomfortably too close to our position. Murder was in their faces as they used their rifles at point blank range, many of them from their hips. The scene of confusion and excitement caused by this sudden visitation of crazy armed men could be better imagined than described. Most of the spectators fled towards the east entrance gate that led into Clonliffe Road and Foster Avenue. Here many were trampled to death, men and women alike, while the Auxies popped off a number of others, even one of the players, Paddy Hogan of the Tipperary team. My companions and I dropped over a convenient wall into Belvedere Grounds, and in doing so got separated, and happy to relate, safely away. Thus the day became known as "Bloody Sunday".

A little personal note may be appended relative to our presence at that match in Croke Park on that November day. Prior to the occasion, we had been speaking to Comdt. Byrne, who had expressed his opinion against our going to Croke Park. "Something might happen", he mused. We, of course, on our part could not have anticipated such wild happenings, and as there was no order against our going there, did not see anything remiss in continuing our support of Gaelic games and, in turn, enjoying ourselves. Certainly we were wiser and, of course, sadder men after the event.

Even the blood bath, the bloody holocaust of Croke Park, did not seemingly provide ample satisfaction for the Crown forces, for that night Dublin was to witness many a wild scene as lorry loads of Auxiliaries went mad careering through its streets, shouting as they went on their lawful or, mayhaps, unlawful missions. Many a man whom misfortune placed into the not gentle or tender hands of the Auxies that night had reason to feel anything but elated for the experience of being put through the mill and otherwise being shown what was in store for the I.R.A. Murder Gang.

Chapter 18.

Hardly had the excitement produced by these several happenings subsided when, towards the end of November and early in December, a tremendous round up and arrest of members of the Dublin Brigade was effected. This was occasioned by, as was so freely stated at the time, the seizure on the part of the Crown forces of a list, or lists, of names and addresses of I.R.A. men.

The general opinion was that the record, or records, had been discovered in a raid on the home or domicile of a prominent I.R.A. officer. That it was of some substantial importance was amply borne out by the results accruing from the round up when several hundred members of the Dublin Brigade were arrested in one night. Their homes were visited and searched, the menfolk questioned, and so thoroughly informed were the British authorities that in many instances the suspects could be told their ranks and the units to which they were affiliated. These raids and arrests were not confined to any one district; they covered a wide area in Dublin and were carried out during curfew hours, which had been extended from November 23rd and by which citizens were required to be off the streets between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Some couple of days before that big raid on the part of the British, our headquarters had issued orders to certain officers and men, especially officers, not to sleep in their own homes. Obviously our headquarters expected such a move. Many of us had become too accustomed to orders of such a nature during the previous year or two. It was not always easy or found practical to acquiesce in these orders for one reason or another. Sometimes one could not secure alternative accommodation at the time or within the notice specified, unless one happened to be in the fortunate position, a not altogether likely possibility, of being well acquainted with friendly people possessing spare space. On an average, friendly disposed persons were willing and prepared to take such chances, even at the risk of their own individual freedom and personal inconvenience, and

though the law imposed heavy penalties for harbouring I.R.A. men, especially some who were regarded as being dangerous or wanted men, some continued to take the chance.

It even happened, too, that certain expected raids did not occur, in consequence of which many I.R.A. men got into a happy-go-lucky stride, even to the point of make-believe that some of the orders prescribing sleeping away from one's own home were only false alarms. Such they appeared to be on divers occasions when nothing happened. Some even took the chance of non-compliance with the orders, or a particular order, not uncommonly to their own undoing and resulting in their capture and imprisonment or internment. Then again, due to the intensified widespread nature of the raids, there was the danger of being captured in other districts. For that matter, one might luckily escape by staying away from home for a night, or a period, and, perhaps, when it appeared safe to return might be caught in their own homes. There was, of course, always the possibility of such a contingency occurring. My own experience at the time may be cited.

A couple of nights before the big round-up of I.R.A. men in Dublin, as referred to above, I had been sleeping away from home and, in so doing, obeying the orders issued by I.R.A. authorities. I found myself housed in a building in St. Stephen's Green which was being run as a commercial training college, the caretaker of which happened to be an uncle of a good friend of mine who was a member of H Company. Nothing untoward occurred on the first night. On the second night, however, our quietude was suddenly, nay ruefully, broken by the unmistakably intense activity of the British

forces and the too noisy and incessant movement of military lorries, armoured cars and patrols operating closeby. We had a feeling that raiding on a big scale was taking place. How convenient to our abode we could not hazard a guess. We considered ourselves in no good position then. What if the place in which we were domiciled was raided? Naturally we could have proffered some excuse or other for our presence there - blamed the curfew for it and insisted that we had overstayed our time in the house that night. We might even have got away with that plausible excuse - provided no suspicions attached to our being associated with the I.R.A.

Our friends, however, to their great credit and wonderful spirit showed up very well during the occasion. We had enough reason and sense to realise the injury that would befall them were we arrested on the premises, presuming that the implication of harbouring I.R.A. men could be sustained. The likelihood that our arrests, under such circumstances, would jeopardise them, cause our host's dismissal from his position as caretaker, with the attendant possibility of his and his family's eviction from their home, went a long way to cause us embarrassment and culpability in a situation that was neither pleasant nor agreeable. The hours rolled by slowly - aggravatingly slow. With the advent of dawn came the happy relief that the British were not raiding within the proximate ambit of our new found domicile.

We had reason to be elated for that small mercy. How fortunate that the British were so near and yet so far away from us. About 50 yards distance divided us. We were sufficiently near enough to discern that they

were in great strength and that they were apparently engaged in a big operation - having taken in a big area which seemed to border one side of Stephen's Green, along that side wherein was situated St. Vincent's Hospital. Baggot St. & Leeson St. were invested by British troops conducting a huge search. They were all the night at it and, if one could judge rightly, they were in no great hurry to leave, as they moved from house to house searching for warlike material and for wanted I.R.A. men. That it was a thorough and systematic raid in which hundreds of soldiers and auxiliaries of all stations participated, none could deny, and it was plain to be seen that the British were gaining in experience in the art of raiding other people's homes and possessions - an experience and an art that was fast becoming a second nature to them.

The methodical investing of areas for the purposes of conducting raids and searches had become quite a regular feature of the forces of law and order. There was, also, something resembling a sense of mystery surrounding these sudden perfunctory swoops. They, the British, made it their especial business to impose an element of mystery and surprise about their every movement and activity. Their nocturnal visitations took them in turn to several sections of Dublin and, working piecemeal in that fashion, had turned up quite a piece of the metropolis for contrabands of war and I.R.A. men. They seemed to work on a systematic plan - making a descent in one area of Dublin one night, the next night another, perhaps a distant area, another night changing to another district and intermittently coming back near to the former scenes of their activities. One never was sure as to when or where they might make

a plunge on any occasion, night or day.

In the particular instance referred to, my pal and I felt somewhat lucky in escaping the cordon on the night in question - were more than thankful for our own safety, and particularly so because of our kind host and hostess who had so nobly befriended us. On the following night I took the risk of sleeping at home, partly out of commiseration for those good folk and because I was prevailed upon by my mother to remain put. Insisting that I "was quite safe here", and that the place would never be raided, I had no choice but to acquiesce to her demands to surrender to her pleadings. Possessing a deeply religious faith, she even expressed her conviction that they would never have the power to enter our home.

That night I had only been in bed a short time, and half asleep, when - horror of horrors! - the British descended on our neighbourhood. There could be no mistaking their purpose or their mission. Loud knocking and thumps on hall doors, the issuing of sharp peremptory military commands, the playing of searchlights on the street and houses, and the hundred and one noises associated with military movements and cars produced in me the feeling that a big raid was in progress. How big I couldn't at the time fathom, but I knew enough to feel that the street in which I lived was invested with British soldiers and Auxiliaries. They entered several houses in different parts of the street. Here was a case of "out of the frying pan into the fire". Escape was out of the question. They were at the back of the house... They were in the house next door... It did not appear to be a house-to-house search. They

seemed to concentrate on certain houses which they entered. They even took men from these, possibly making them prisoners. I knew some of the houses which they entered contained I.R.A. men or Citizen Army men. Hours and hours passed by, and all the while the British forces kept moving from place to place, with an occasional lull between as indicative of their having entered one of the houses and putting same through the ordeal of searching and probing. At length it was over. The investing troops departed, having apparently succeeded in their quest.

The morrow's news recorded the sad tidings of a large number of I.R.A. men having been arrested, among them three or four men residents of the street in which I lived. One of these was a member of our own C Coy, who was ill and under the doctor's care, Bob Kirk. Nor was that all, for on further inquiries the sad information was forthcoming that a large number of Company members had been arrested - which included one of our officers, Lieut. Seán Kennedy. The 1st Battalion suffered heavily from this big round-up, each Company being appreciably weakened thereby. Fortunately only a few officers of the Battalion were so captured. That was the one redeeming feature of the whole episode. It seemed strange too, that among those arrested were some men who had ceased to be effective and active members of the I.R.A. for years; but against this, as far as our Company was concerned, the members arrested were all active bona fide members.

Apropos of that raid and round-up, it might be mentioned that in many instances the Crown forces professed to know quite a deal of information about those

whom they took prisoners, in some cases, particulars essaying their rank and their Company or units. Some of these may have been guesswork. However, there was enough to give one an uncanny feeling that they possessed some little information out of the ordinary. Efforts to trace the source generally revolved around the probability of their having captured some list or lists of names and addresses of Volunteers. Where and how they secured them mystified many of our people. The most obvious query which any of us could put was: How far did that round-up correspond with the maximum total of prisoners required by the British authorities? Was that all they set out to arrest, or all they knew of? The only possible clue to the solution seemed to rest around the likelihood that from the point of view of dealing a telling blow against the I.R.A., it was reasonable to assume that the Crown forces would not act spasmodically or deal piecemeal with them. Indeed, as a matter of policy, they required and worked for the total elimination of the power and influence of the I.R.A.

But then their plans might have miscarried to some extent and a certain measure of failure might have attended their round-up - in either of which events they would try again. One fact emerged and that was, that the British would not be guilty of hesitancy, restraint or solicitude in dealing with members of the I.R.A. It therefore devolved on them to put the I.R.A. out of action in the swiftest possible time, and there was every indication that they were doing their utmost by means of these mass raids and arrests to do so.

One could not help surmising the real intention and policy of the British authorities in conducting such

a large scale round-up or of their general approach to crush the I.R.A. Considering the colossal forces at their command, the extent and mode of their activities in their several aspects, it would be totally erroneous and indiscreet to accuse them of seeking anything but the most successful outcome of their policy and efforts, and this in view of the fact that up to date there was a big list of men for whose capture the 'Hue And Cry' had been raised and upon whose heads various sums of money were offered. Hence it wasn't unfair to deduce that the extreme limit had been reached to rope them all in. Time was proving that such deductions and reasonings were relatively right, because though the Crown forces did not lessen in the slightest degree or scope their warlike operations against our forces, even to the extent of involving the civilian population then growing as accustomed to their martial perambulations,raids, hold-ups and searches as the I.R.A.

The ordinary civilian population accepted the annoyances, the upsets, inconvenience and even hard knocks with unusual fortitude, patience and good grace, so much so as to cause bewilderment and confusion to the British forces as it must have angered and perturbed the British administrative authorities. In endeavouring to deal specifically with the I.R.A., to fight and to crush them was not an easy task while the civilian population, or a large proportion of it, stood as it were in the way of almost every British move, every British activity. Forming as it were a screen or shield against the stupendous onslaughts delivered by the British, the civilian population in the main lent

support and gave encouragement and a large measure of succour to the I.R.A., not without risks or unattended by dire punishment and losses for so doing, and that despite the overwhelming strength and almost crushing ordinances and actions imposed by the British at the time. Particularly was that so in the cases of those of our friends, adherents and supporters who stood by us through thick and thin, oblivious of their own risks and dangers and showing concern for our welfare and the fight we were waging for freedom.

If we were receiving heavy blows and undergoing severe trials, of which the aforementioned raids formed not the least of our troubles and anxieties and had a perceptibly weakening influence on our organisation, both as regards numbers and potential, so too in reverse manner we stoicly and bravely accepted these as inevitable conditions, or in the form of warfare in which anything was possible or probable. We had to content ourselves with things as they were and not what they should, or what we would like them to be. Daily, hourly, our destiny, the destiny of the I.R.A. was being shaped! Events, over which we had no control, contracted to circumscribe our movements and to frustrate our efforts and it was no easy matter for us to keep abreast of the times. Truly we, every member and every Unit in the Dublin Brigade, were going through a trying and tempestuous period. There was ample evidence that that big round-up of recent date had seriously affected our administrative and operational machinery, resulting in a certain perceptible measure of disorganisation and

serious loss of a large number of men, the majority, if not all, of whom would have been considered to be more effective and useful outside rather than inside prison bars or internment cages. Our own Company was no exception to the rule but, unlike some other Units, our losses in officers were relatively small in comparison. We, however, lost the service of one of our officers, 2nd Lieutenant Seán Kennedy, and Quartermaster Charlie Molphy, as well as Volunteers Peadar Meehan, Peter Bowmes, George Bould, Charlie O'Hanlon, Bob Kirk, Seán Farrell, Paddy Macken, Paddy Swan, George Whelan, Larry Wilson, Joe Brabazon, Dinny McGrane, Ned Keane, Jimmy McArdle, Tom Cassidy, Joe Conroy, Con and Joe Mulligan. Our former Quartermaster, Mark Wilson, was already under lock and bars doing a prison sentence. Fortunately, though our losses in prisoners were substantial, they did not represent an eighth of our Company's effective strength, for at that period our membership totalled the one hundred and thirty figure, a figure which, since our re-organisation in 1917, had been, we were proud to boast, maintained with few defections and many new entrants. In respect to new entrants, it may be pertinent to mention the influx of transferred Fianna boys to our Company - a movement of new blood that had been going on by an arrangement agreed to between General Headquarters of the I.R.A. and the Fianna Executive. As boys reached the eighteen years mark, they were duly drafted to I.R.A. Companies. At the time in question - towards the end of 1920 - quite a few of that category were transferred to "C" Company, such as, Gerry Grennell, William Carroll, Patrick O'Toole, Anthony Madden, William Curry and George Bould. These boys played a role in the

affairs of the Company no less effective than their new confrères. Due to their training in the Fianna, their services were particularly useful in the sphere of intelligence and such duties as observing and reporting the movement of unfriendly people and enemy suspects and movement of transport. The fact that they were "only boys" increased their value and provided them with a freedom of movement and accessibility into realms of things which other people, their senior, could not pry or operate. These boys were ever ready, day or night, to perform any work requiring their attention or assistance. Several instances could be advanced in proof of their service, one of which, I make bold to cite, concerned the secret use of private cars by the British authorities.

Information had been conveyed to our Captain, Seán Flood, that cars belonging to a certain business man, who carried on his business affairs in the vicinity of Dorset Street, were used during curfew hours for transporting British personnel. It had even been suggested that they had been in use during raids conducted by the British on the homes of I.R.A. men. A careful, thorough check-up was instituted by day and by night which lasted for over a period of weeks. At length proof being forthcoming concerning their illicit use in the British interest, a raid was carried out by a group of our men on the premises referred to and ^{one of} the cars was accordingly burned and destroyed.

During the period under review, Captain Seán Flood had occasional absences from his beloved Dublin and his equally beloved Company. He was on confidential and highly secret work connected with

I.R.A. affairs in England. Sharing his confidence, though not of course being intimately aware of the full significance or scope of his confidential work, I had enough imagination to appraise the value of the service he was rendering in enemy territory and, owing to his varied absences, the duty devolved on me to guide the destinies of our Company. How far his services were related to the series of retaliatory actions that were, or had been carried out by the I.R.A. in England, we had no reason to know or assess. One of these actions concerned the burning of property to the value of a million pounds in Liverpool towards the end of November, 1920. Those of us who knew Seán's spirit and character had no doubts in our minds but that he would give a good account of himself in whatever work he was assigned. The climax of his service in our "C" Company was reached eventually on foot of some of the strange happenings in England when news came of Seán Flood's promotion to the rank, as we understood it to be, of O/C Britain. That news came to us in a not pleasant but a strange way. On a certain night in, I think, December, 1920, two of us, namely Frank Carberry and myself, met Seán at the house, 6 Whitworth Place, where we assumed Seán was staying. In taking us into his confidence, he communicated the information of his new appointment which, in short, entailed his severance of the command of our Company. We knew enough of him to appreciate that such a course caused him sorrow and heart-burning. It meant, so to speak, breaking a tie of friendship and of collaboration that was directly personal as it was deeply selective. Even his "brave show" by which he sought to maintain a

calm serene exterior was as unconvincing as his naive and modest remark, "You will be able to keep the Company together". Could we have probed the innermost recesses of his mind, perhaps a different story might be unfolded.

Our conversation that night was mainly devoted to our Company affairs, on every aspect of which he was quite familiar, and it was a delight to listen to him furnishing the several details on such subjects as organisation, armaments and routine matters. His greatest concern was, and in which he expressed full confidence, namely, that the Company would continue the good work and survive. Qualifying his confidence was his so simple remark, "You will be able to carry on the Company with two officers", this, after he had notified us that I was to take over the command of the Company and Carberry was to be 1st Lieutenant, the orders for which had been made by G.H.Q. Seán's reference to orders of G.H.Q., by which we were appointed officers, came as a surprise to us because, up to that time, the method of selecting officers for Company units was by way of election in which the members voted for choice of candidate and in the case of Battalion staff on the votes of Company officers and so on. That procedure had gone by the board and in future appointments would be made by G.H.Q.

In detailing the two of us - Carberry and myself - as officers of the Company, Seán Flood had in mind our recent losses due to the recent raids. Some necessary adjustments had been made to fill the positions rendered vacant by the arrests of Lieutenant Kennedy and Quartermaster Molphy and, in consequence, Sergeant

Dinny Holmes had been created Lieutenant and Volunteer Seán Nathan as Quartermaster respectively. Shortly afterwards Lieutenant Holmes was arrested and lodged in Mountjoy Jail. Our N.C.O's consisted of Patrick Byrne, Patrick Kirk, William Maher and Mark Kelly, each of whom had charge of a section, four of which made up the Company, two a half-Company. One of those sections consisted of men attached to special services, such as, Signalling, First Aid, Machine Gun and Armoury, under Sergeant Kelly, ~~while another under Sergeant Kelly~~, while another under Sergeant Kirk was composed of men specifically trained in the use of grenades. All the men were trained in the use of rifle, revolver and grenade, especially the two latter on which we had concentrated most of our time and attention for a number of years previously. In the peculiar situation existing at the time herein related, the main concern, as Seán Flood emphasised, was to keep the Company going. There were always difficulties in the way of doing that. We had reason to anticipate as great if not greater difficulties in the future. Somehow in the past we had met and overcome difficulties, mainly through the indefatigable labours and the persevering nature of our guide and Captain, Seán Flood. He had been a tower of strength to us and our Company and had proved himself to be not only our Captain but also our counsellor and friend, one whom we could look up to and rely upon at all times and in every situation that had arisen during the arduous and multitudinous stormy period of our existence. Always at the helm he had captained our Company through trials and dangers, never flagging and never tiring in his devotion in leadership and the spirit of adventure and service for a cause which he so

nobly espoused and consistently served. In our estimation, Seán Flood was the very incarnation of everything that was noble and beautiful in our independence movement. The closer one got and the more intimate one became acquainted with him, the more one loved him, for Seán could be humble and exalting without being a bore or a top-hat for he possessed a charming, happy and free disposition, a gay and gentle nature and a winsome and radiant personality, all of which went a long way in winning him many friends, many associates and not a few confidants. If perchance we erred in hero-worshipping him or in being too ready to place him on a high eminence, the fault, if fault it could be, lay not so much with us for so doing. The fact that he endeared himself to us, that we knew his worth and qualities as a Volunteer and as our officer, mattered much to us who loved him and were inspired by him in the work which he and we were engaged. He was superb and at his best in the conduct of training, administering and controlling our Company, sparing neither time nor labour, indeed making many sacrifices to make us good efficient soldiers of the Republic. None perhaps were more cognisant of these than those of us who, as junior officers or N.C.O's, came into very close association with him. But there were others, outside the realm of our Company, who appraised his work and his worth and, if the appointment made by G.H.Q. at the period in question displaced him from our Company affairs, the high honour conferred on him served to show that he was held in great esteem and trusted to fill an important position of trust away from the immediate scene of his recent labour and work. That appointment reflected favourably on our Company,

though at the time those of us who knew or sensed the importance of the mission to which Seán had been called felt a very personal and keen loss by his severance from our Company affairs. We could hardly forbid ourselves grumbling against the ordinance that seemed to conduce to weaken our Company at a time when his presence and his leadership was so essential and desirable. But he on the night of his leave-taking, though showing concern and expressing sorrow for his resignation, gave no countenance to our growls or our condemnations. Duty to him was a far too precious quality to be localised, circumscribed or even circumvented. The call of duty and the rendering of service he held to be too sacred and important to permit of personal feelings or individual choice. One had either to lawfully and unhesitatingly obey or get out, and so it was no surprise to us that he freely accepted the commission to serve elsewhere and wherever he was designated if by so doing obedience to duty directed such a course of action a matter of necessity.

One very sad and saddening feature of Seán Flood's passing on to new spheres and activities was epitomised by the almost hush-hush and secrecy involved. It pained us - we knew it pained him - to part in that rather unorthodox, unceremonious way without taking personal adieux of his beloved comrades, his confrères of his Company. It was not politic or possible to do otherwise but to communicate his thoughts, his regrets and good wishes through us to them. He was so nice about everything, so considerate, so natural, and kind in every way as to make the task on our part an easy one to carry on "the good work in the Company". The

one jarring disparate note in the whole affair concerned our inability to take the Company into our confidence and communicate in full detail everything concerning Seán Flood's retiral and new appointment. We could not do so. Seán could not do so, for obvious reasons, prime of which herebefore mentioned centred round the point of secrecy and high affairs of state. Hence, many Volunteers were unaware at the time of the reasons for the absence of Seán Flood from the Company. Even the full implications contained in our appointments - I as Captain and Frank Carberry as 1st Lieutenant - may not have been clearly understood or imagined. Perhaps the fact that I had from time to time been acting in the capacity of O/C during Seán's temporary occasional absences, helped materially in allaying suspicion that anything out of the ordinary was happening. We on our part, however, had no choice in the matter but to draw the curtain down on a scene that was the acme of mystery and contained an element of melodrama in which Seán played the major part and we a minor role in pursuit of a settled policy to do what was considered best in a grand plan to win laurels for our side in the cast. As we came away from him that night, what other thoughts could we reasonably have, or entertain, but that we had parted with one who was a brave man, an efficient Volunteer officer and a dear friend.

Towards the end of 1920 the Irish political situation and particularly the military situation, as it affected the I.R.A., was sufficiently grave and menacing. On the one side, the Crown forces lost no opportunity to strike terror and to cause devastation wherever and however they went, and following up every

advantage to gain mastery over, as they so blandly declared, the "I.R.A. murder gang". They had a will and a way for doing even the most unsavoury and despotic things. Pride of place for most of the "terrible happenings" of the period was accorded to the Black and Tans and to the Auxiliaries, the "Auxies" as we of the Dublin Brigade termed them. Pent up for fight and obviously eager for adventure in any shape or form, these had become past masters in military and unmilitary activity - reprisals, secret shootings, waylaying of citizens and I.R.A. men alike, arson and brigandage had become an official and unofficial part of their profession - testifying to what extent men who were acclaimed by their astute paymasters to be soldiers and policemen could go to crush the spirit of a people fighting to be free. On the other side, the I.R.A., pursuing a policy of passive and active resistance and adopting guerilla warfare tactics which, in our parlance, signified "hitting and running", kept the British on the move, perplexed and always guessing as to every and any move intended or directed. In the form of military activity as pursued by the I.R.A., we had grown accustomed to the employment of the small groups or parties, utilising them at various times and in devious ways according to circumstances and object in view. We had reached the stage then of being on our toes and poised for action, for orders had been issued to the Dublin Brigade to get going on plans to ambush British forces in the streets. It was reasonable then to assume that a trial of strength was being forged in order, one way or the other, to create a decision in the military sphere.

The adoption of the policy of street fighting and street ambushing in Dublin was indeed an extreme and important step in the vital course of stepping up and accelerating the pace to wage guerilla warfare against an enemy that was well habilitated and strongly entrenched to meet opposition from our side, but it was an inevitable course which had to be faced and met if we as a fighting force were to bring any substantial weight against them. Up to the period under review, the Dublin Brigade had conducted a form of warfare that had only indirectly affected the British military machine. The innumerable perfunctory raids in pursuit of exercising a boycott on goods of Belfast and, in some cases, of English manufacture, raids for arms and on the mails, the shootings of British agents, detectives, spies and informers, the many measures to demonstrate the power and influence of the I.R.A., short of shooting unfriendly persons, by tying them to railings, of employing "tar and feather" methods and the affixing of labels to them bearing the warning, "Spies and informers beware!", or despatching them to unknown destinations, in banishing them from Ireland and the hundred-and-one other forms of activity aiming at the destruction of enemy stores and property, the burning of buildings and vehicles, were but preliminaries to a more extensive and intensive form of warfare.

Anything was possible and potent in a situation in which we were then placed. Outside our several forms of activity, the major portion of our forces in Dublin had been playing a passive and generally non-active part in the fight. In many instances, Company units were tied up and had limited scope for action

except occasional outbursts. In saying that, let it not be thought that Companies were totally inactive, to the point of being mere spectators of a game that was being played for big prizes. Such was impossible at the time and for obvious reasons, between one thing and another, Company Officers had to face up to many difficulties and tackle many problems outside the realm of actual fighting. Without elaborating these, it may be pertinent to refer to the question of supplies as one of the serious problems in which many Companies were involved. Over the period of years since 1916 that problem had caused concern and worry to many a Company officer. Never adequate or substantially sustained, our supply of war materials had not been such as to provide anything but a fraction of our demands. The amount of up-to-date, effective weapons were only sufficient to arm in a modest way a mere group in each Company and, when it is considered that of late Companies had had to part with a number of their stock of service rifles, small in numbers at any time, for use of the Flying Columns then operating in the various parts of the country, the problem permitted of no easy solution. It must be understood too that the general conception of bringing the war to Dublin centred round the possibility that we of the Dublin Brigade would employ all weapons in the course of the fighting, as visualised. Any other opinion or conjecture would, and was, deemed inadmissible, unsustaining and importune.

That the course promulgated by our G.H.Q. and about to be put into operation in Dublin suggested the idea that only small arms and grenades were to be used came as a surprise to many of not alone the Company

officers but men also. No question, however, was raised to the principle as such of the policy of street fighting as a part of the guerilla warfare, although to an extent opinions differed, not as to the necessity for some such course, but on the score of whether we could wage that form of warfare with the measure of success as anticipated. The more reasoned and relative argument against such a course concerned more the question of means and methods rather than the purpose aimed at. Other considerations were not altogether unrelated to the many questions raised and arguments advanced on the pros and cons of such fighting, the main one being the element or possibility of the involvement of the civilian population and the inevitable risks and dangers, even injury and death, through the pursuing on our part of street warfare. The position, as we found it, was that in trying to fight the British we should also have to contend with a non-combatant and, in the main, a non-aggressive element, a civilian population, the majority of whom were not altogether unfriendly to us and to the national principles of freedom for which we were fighting. Truth to tell, there were many among us who could not feel other than lenient to and sorrow for such people, and the fact that there were included in that category those who were our own kith and kindred aggravated the situation and narrowed the choice considerably, if choice there were, on an issue in which our sole policy was directed in hitting our enemy by any and every means at our disposal.

From whatever angles we viewed the matter, danger to our own people was interlocked with the possible and

proximate dangers to the British forces against whom we were specifically contending. In striking at them we would run the chance of inflicting greater or lesser injury on the other. The position was like as unto two boxers in a ring with a third party standing between. Neither could fight the other contestant while the, shall we say, in-between party remained proximately present in that position. Every step taken, every blow delivered or sought to be delivered, increased the chance and possibility of harming the in-between, or proved ineffective in the desired direction of securing victory to either of the combatants. Unless a means could be provided to, as it were, neutralise the non-combatant element, the course of the fight between the two contestants would degenerate into wild flashes and punches without regard for the safety or welfare of the misplaced and unfortunate in-between.

That might or might not be a fair analogy to make in the situation into which we were heading, but it was not an unreasonable representation of some of the difficulties that were linked with the problem connected with the street fighting to which we were committed. Stress must be laid on the point that it was no easy or pleasant choice to make when we realised and appreciated the full implication of the dangers the civilian population would be exposed to. We had no means to remove those dangers unless by holding our hands and refusing to fight the British in the way planned. The general concensus of opinion among officers and men of the Dublin Brigade favoured a more aggressive forward move to the courses hitherto carried out and it was generally conceded that G.H.Q. was alive to every contingency, capable of and willing to develop the

fighting as circumstances permitted.

In viewing the policy and in considering the possible ramifications and difficulties connected with the plans for street warfare, it might be well to take into account the relative reactions of the rank and file of the I.R.A. to the course proposed. In the main, it was received in the spirit as being a necessary evil and that no other course was possible, or could be regarded as effective in the then serious situation prevailing. Many there were who, if we were to give credence to individuals' conversations and expressed views, regarded the course in the light that we might weaken the civilian population or alienate those of our friends rather than the British force and, as a result, be a boomerang to us instead of an advantage to our cause. There was a genuine fear that our maximum effort to intensify the fighting in that way might produce minimum results, were the civilian population to be exposed to and compelled to bear harm and injury disproportionate to that inflicted on the British. Appreciating the uneven contest in which our forces and the native population, or that large portion that remained faithful to us, were so closely entwined, reason suggested that they would regard with apprehension the possible repercussions which action of that kind might have on our cause. Few among us were so highly enamoured of the new plan as to accept it as being the best, or the only solution to our problem to wage absolute war on an enemy that was showing its strength and putting great efforts into their "drives" in order to over-awe and to destroy us. Yet, short of sitting down and taking the medicine that the British prescribed, some form of aggressiveness and aggressive action was

generally conceived to be desirable.

Naturally our principal concern was for our own side and, as we were engaged in and conducting a people's war for a people's right to be free, it followed as a corollary that we were bound to give consideration to the welfare of the civilian population, and a concern that was governed by what might be termed the uncertain quality and undefined factor of the people's reaction to the policy of street fighting. We had the very unpleasant feeling and unwholesome forebodings that they would on occasions be exposed to trial, danger and harm during ambushes, that as often as not they would be in the danger zone, not once or twice but many times, presupposing that those ambush attacks would become the order of the day, and that, as a result, their presence might naturally affect the fighting quality of our men or the course of the guerilla warfare. The issue indeed was such that, had G.H.Q. of the I.R.A. not decided it for us by the issuing of direct orders, no such action would have accrued, out of consideration for the safety of our people and because we felt our hands were tied by the civilian population, sometimes baulking our every move and very frequently standing in the way of our fight against the alien foe.

Heretofore, as has already been mentioned, activity in Dublin consisted of raids, street patrols, etc., With the turn of events, the bold course of conducting warfare in the streets of the metropolis became settled I.R.A. policy. Already in the country what were designated "flying columns" had been instituted and had shown many forms of guerilla warfare, such as, ambushes, some of them on a big scalé, and

other types of military operations. Their exploits and their daring had been published in 'An tOglach', our official organ. We in the Dublin Brigade learned many lessons from the accounts circulated from time to time concerning them and, in consequence, many a stout heart envied them for their good luck in being able to operate so freely and so independently wherever they liked. We knew that many of those flying columns consisted of "wanted men" and men "on the run", those who were wanted by the British for committing "certain crimes". The fact that the flying columns were full time and always on the move had a certain appeal to many men of not alone the Dublin but other Brigades. That they were keeping abreast of events, no one could gainsay or question.

In Dublin, however, a different situation had to be faced and was being met in a totally different manner. Hence, the adoption of the plans whereby Companies were required to engage in ambushing British forces. Hence it was that Company officers made careful and minute analysis of their personnel and potential, selecting the types of men and material requisite for such action or actions. In this respect, special pride of place was given to the utilisation of revolvers and grenades, which we were given to understand were to be the main weapons to be used in our form of warfare. In the country the flying columns operated with rifles and/or shotguns, revolvers and grenades. They were always on duty and operated in open country, so that the use of the rifle was necessary and feasible. The same conditions did not apply in our particular cases, for we had contracted and restricted scope for any weapons other than small arms and grenades. Besides, our G.H.Q. made the order so and, choice or no choice, we had no option but to

obey and bring the war to Dublin.

From this time onwards the presence of ambush parties on the streets of Dublin became quite a regular feature of I.R.A. routine, our Company like other Companies in the Dublin Brigade being no exception to the rule. In the initial stages, they were a movable force operating in the same fashion as a street patrol, moving around or within their respective Company areas in which they by then were familiar. Sometimes in groups of four, six or eight men, they operated in the night, or selected nights on request of the Battalion or at the discretion of Company officers, but generally the latter case applied, with the result that such activities became Company affairs.

Then came the formation of the Active Service Unit in the early part of 1921. Under orders of the Dublin Brigade Headquarters, that unit was to be formed on lines similar to the flying columns, with the difference that the A.S.U., unlike the flying columns, were to be full time in the sense of being self-contained and a distinct paid force, would operate in the day time and be off duty in the night. Many of those could, when off duty, return to their homes and be, or pretend to be, "good citizens". The plan of campaign envisaged them as operating in the day while the Company units operated in the night time. When the A.S.U. was being formed, Company officers were notified to furnish the names of men considered suitable. The important condition attaching to membership of that body was that the men so volunteering should resign from their ordinary civilian employment, profession or trade. Payment in lieu of wages or salary would be made at the rate of £3.10.0. per week.

The selection of men and the actual formation of the Dublin A.S.U. was held on a Saturday afternoon in a hall in Oriel Street when about fifty aspirants paraded in the presence of Brigadier Oscar Traynor. Of the number, three of our Company men were selected: Seán Quinn, Dermot O'Sullivan and Jim Carrigan. Though Lieutenant Frank Carberry and myself offered our services and were present at the meeting, we were not accepted for reasons that, as the Brigadier explained, "we had other important work in our Own Company". To the men duly selected he explained the purpose for which the Unit was being formed, emphasising that from that day they were on active service and would serve under special officers appointed to conduct the new force. Captain Paddy Flanagan became O/C of that Unit.

That innovation, the establishment of an Active Service Unit, was aimed at putting into the fight in Dublin a new and increased system of guerilla warfare or rather to accelerate the pace and supplement the activities of the various Companies of the Brigade. It did not mean and was not intended to take complete charge of all activities and operations in the Dublin area, or to supplant the Companies in any way. The main purpose sought was to provide and produce continuity in operations and an extension of the periods in which operations, activities, ambushes, etc., would be carried out. In that way provision was made for the utilisation of the A.S.U. at periods when Companies were generally unable to operate, except on rare occasions when men were available, or made themselves available on some pretext or other, or due to unemployment. Company officers not infrequently found difficulty in securing the services of men in

their command for the purpose of carrying out some stunt or other, unless such was planned well in advance and with careful thought and consideration. In many instances men had feigned illness or taken absence from their work for the purpose, in some cases losing a half-day's or full-day's pay for their pains. There were even instances where men slipped out from work without being detected by their foremen or employers. As the work connected with the arrangement and provision of ambush parties progressed, Companies - at least, our Company - found that a few other men could be utilised on a Wednesday and Saturday afternoon because those days were half holidays in certain business establishments. Even at best the Companies could not carry out the orders to put the maximum effort into the fight, however we sought at the time to do so. Many other things and circumstances militated against this, the principal of which were the difficulties of placing armaments at the disposal of a large number of men, or of different groups of men, and, as was too manifest, the non-availability of officers and N.C.O's for operations outside their ordinary civilian working periods.

This was where General Headquarters, understanding the true position of affairs in Company units and desirous of extending the scope and tempo of the guerilla campaign in the Dublin area, decided to meet the situation by bringing into being the Active Service Unit. In that way a new field of activity was opened bare for exploiting. The fact too that the A.S.U. could operate in any part of Dublin or County was a consideration of great and prime importance, thus affording them greater scope for activities than that

possessed by ordinary Companies. Operating under direct orders of Brigade and G.H.Q. as a separately and distinctively special unit under the command of selective officers and N.C.O's, that body, from the first period of its initiation, set a sharp and quick pace to the fight in Dublin. By so doing, the Dublin Brigade I.R.A. could report that hardly a day passed without some form of activity, ambush or raid having been attempted or carried out, thereby winning a name and a fame to which they were justly entitled, and perhaps becoming the envy of their comrades in the gap of danger and of other units as well.

Concerning the personnel of the A.S.U., a brief summary of some of their names may be permissible. They were drawn from the various Dublin Battalions and comprised quite a good number of men of our 1st Battalion, men like Frank Flood of "H" Company, Paddy and Seán Doyle of "F", Bernard Ryan of "F", Christy Fitzsimons, Tom Flood and Tommy Bryan of the 2nd Battalion to mention but a few.

Corresponding with the institution of the A.S.U., the Companies became likewise active and were on the move for the purpose of ambushing British troops. The former system of movable patrols or ambush parties was replaced by that of stationary positions. Generally street corners were availed of for the purposes of attack. Surprise and speed or, in other words, "hit and run" tactics were considered essential conditions for successful operations. The number of men and amount of material varied. The plans also varied in regard to the nature of the projected ambushes and the circumstances governing them. As has already been mentioned, prime consideration was given to the employment of revolver and grenade. Sometimes unarmed men would accompany the active ambush party - such men might be utilised for

scouting or to assist in getting men safely away after an ambush. Even the smallest ambush party entailed a certain amount of careful planning and direction in order to get the number and type of men required at the selected spot and at the time arranged. Consideration had also to be given to the amount and type of materials to suit the particular operation as well as arrangements for their safe withdrawal and the safe depositing of armaments after it. In every respect, the onus rested on Company officers in all matters relating to the selection and disposal of the men to be engaged and the site for the proposed operation. Great scope was thereby given within the framework of the somewhat limited scope of Company areas to develop the fighting.

In the initial stage of posting men to ambush parties, many difficulties had to be faced. Company officers - and this was so in regard to our Company - were confronted with the problem of sorting and arranging the men for the allotted task or tasks. Our Company could not perhaps be regarded as any exception to the rule whereby certain specific types of men were selected for such particular forms of duty or activity. This was not as easy as one might suppose or anticipate when consideration is given to the point that anything in the nature of undue discrimination had to be shown in favour of any certain category of men in a unit. It was a big responsibility to place on Company officers, yet it had to be met in some way or other, as it was not possible to bring in all the men at the one given time, for reasons already explained, such as, sparcity of materials, and certain experimental trials had to be made, as well as from the point of view of gaining

experience. Selection had to be made on the basis of employing a few of those in the Company unit who had been tested on other "jobs" or "stunts". Such jobs or stunts consisted of raids, etc., of various kinds and descriptions, in which our men had given previous service.

Discrimination there was then, but only on that particular score and not for the purpose of showing that only the few men were worthwhile, or to show any special favour for some, thus casting doubt on the many members of the Company. We appreciated that in each unit there were a number of men that had already been tested and tried in several activities. Other considerations had to be given, among them being the availability of the men, their efficiency and, of course, their physical make-up. The greatest concern was on the question of the men's reaction to the exacting duty of ambushing and how they would stand up to it. We realised that the form of warfare prescribed would put severe strain on the men's patience, courage and spirit, greater perhaps than any other type of action to which some had become accustomed. On two of those qualities, we had no earthly doubt - courage and spirit they had in ample measure - but patience of the type required for ambushing signified something that had to be acquired in the hard school of experience. The main essentials were to hold one's nerves in check, to control the natural tendencies to give up, and to be unyielding in the midst of visible or invisible dangers.

In every plan that was devised to strike at the foe, we had always to take into account the human factor and the possibility, nay, the probability of our men

having to remain on duty for unreasonably long periods. Even an hour or more on such duty was trying in the extreme, though such might not be thought so in ordinary circumstances. But to men stationed at the one position where danger always appeared imminent, and when they were taking many risks in doing so, the time factor as well as the human factor was not merely important but often nerve-wracking. It was this that tested the men's patience and gift of perseverance. To while away the time, to stay put, without attracting undue attention or suspicion as to the purpose of their mission there, were not easy matters to accomplish as the ordinary civilian became bomb-minded or ambush-minded.

Our men also had to be sensitive to the perambulations and activities of the British forces in order to bring off an attack against them when there were reasonable chances of doing so, or alternatively, to disguise their purpose or "fade away" when unreasonable forces appeared on the scene, for the British, in pursuit of their incessant policy of making swoops on people in the streets by their "hold-ups" and searches, might alight from their cars and pounce on our men as a matter of "doing our duty, Paddy" and apart from them having any knowledge of the intentions of our men. In any of these eventualities, the onus resided in our men to be extremely patient, alert and quickwitted.

The greatest care had to be taken by the men to appear unsuspecting without attracting unnecessary attention in the vicinity of the operation and to, as it were, look as peaceable as any ordinary citizen. These were not easily accomplished as the public suspicions became aroused by the presence of us, strangers, in

the locality in which we operated. Every known subterfuge had to be adopted and great care taken to guard against detection, surprise or capture. Occasions there were when the presence of too many civilians and children frustrated the possible launching of a stunt or, as happened on one occasion, a group of men sought to beat up some of our men who were operating in Capel Street, waiting to attack a party of plain-clothes R.I.C. One of the civilians, the ringleader of the group, attacked one of our men with a knife. Other men supported his efforts. Immediately a wild scene ensued firticuffs being used by our men to ward off the attack and it was only when the ringleader was "laid out" on the ground that finis was put to the affair. Fortunately, guns were not used by our men. Ironically, the leader of the would-be assailants was not alone friendly to our cause but a member of another section of the Republican forces. A strange feature about this business was that the civilians in question thought one of our men was a Black and Tan and, stranger still, the party of R.I.C. after our men had had to decamp, passed by the place some time later that night.

In connection with the latter body, our organisation from time to time became aware of their activities and their deeds. They were Sergeants and policemen from different parts of Ireland. These R.I.C. men, known as the Igoe Gang, were regarded as being part of a murder gang whose special task it was to deal with wanted or dangerous I.R.A. men. Moving freely around and through the streets of Dublin in groups and always armed with revolvers, they sought to pick up men for whom they were looking. They operated

in patrol fashion in pairs, each of which were divided by several yards. Sometimes they occupied both sides of a street. They bore the name of being "tough", good shots and good fighters and quite desperate men. On the night in question a group of men from one Company had been detailed to occupy selected points on their patrol route to attack them with revolvers. Fortune and good luck, however, favoured them that night as, we had been aware, favoured them on previous occasions. Somehow or other, these men appeared to be elusive, having many of the advantages in being able to move when and where they liked without the visible signs of the trappings of war, uniform or even military order. Hence the difficulty of meeting and attacking them. The name and fame of that R.I.C. group became legendary among many I.R.A. men, especially in Dublin, a source of annoyance and anxiety especially to those of them on the run or wanted, many of whom were serving with the Dublin Brigade.

The part which the Dublin Brigade was playing with the operation of the A.S.U. and the Companies in various areas had as its main consideration the pinning down of as large a force of the Crown forces as possible in Dublin, so as to prevent their use in other parts of Ireland. These were deemed to be containing tactics. Consequently, every action on our part in the Dublin command helped to keep more soldiers and auxiliaries, a force of ex British officers stationed at Beggars Bush Barracks, of the British forces here at a time when their services were needed in other parts. The task was not an easy one viewed in the light that Dublin was the the seat of British administration in which its army, general headquarters and military machine were

largely situated. The methods and scope for fighting were dissimilar to those operative by the self-contained and easy movements of the flying columns in some areas in the country where the Crown forces were less static and where mobility and space, rather than numbers, counted for much in the general plan of operations as carried out by I.R.A. commands.

The guerilla warfare being waged by the various elements composing the Dublin Brigade was reaching a vital pitch and intensity as the men became familiar with the duties involved and the civilian population had hardened to the continuance of street fighting. Contrary to our expectations, doubts and fears, the citizens of Dublin bore the strain with great fortitude, spirit and courage, and were even getting accustomed to pitched battles and ambushing. Those among them who were friendly to our cause opened their hearts and their homes to men on the run, wanted or hard-pressed I.R.A. men. From time to time General Headquarters supplied I.R.A. officers with lists of friendly doctors and chemists to whom wounded men could be brought for treatment. Hospitals to which the friendly doctors were attached, friendly nurses and members of the staff were listed and circulated to officers in whose areas such were situated or practised. This course was made imperative by the action of the British authorities requesting the reporting by doctors of wounded men treated by them. To the credit of the medical profession, that decree was resisted.

Apropos of the help forthcoming from some of our friends may be cited the following incident that occurred in our Company some time in 1920. A special

parade had been called by our Company Captain, Seán Flood. The men paraded at 41 Parnell Square. Only those who were in possession of revolvers were present, some 20 or so. The object was to inspect the revolvers to ascertain if they were in good condition and to call in some of them for transference to other men. There was a fear that, because of enemy raids, the guns might be allowed to get into bad condition. Such was found to be groundless. During the inspection one of the revolvers - an automatic - got jammed and unfortunately, in the course of trying to have it righted, it fired, the bullet penetrating through the table around which our men were seated, whizzing between some men and lodging in the foot of another. To say that it caused excitement would be using a mild term. Along with the fear that the man was badly injured was the danger that the shot might be heard in the street below or in the house.

After applying first-aid of a kind to our wounded man, a motor, the property of the Battalion, was secured and despatched to the Mater Hospital. The good Sister in attendance said, "You're Thomas Smith", (some name was mentioned other than his right one) and it was the one he became known by. It was so funny but it was safe and good.

Then again a list of friendly people and houses was compiled and distributed to the respective officers of Companies. To those people and places men went in need of shelter or for the treatment in an emergency and for the rendering of first aid and recuperation. Most of the houses available to such necessitous cases were inhabited by members of the Cumann na mBan, the women's

auxiliary force attached to the I.R.A. but not a few were placed at our disposal by relatives of our own men and sympathisers. By such means, the I.R.A. in Dublin could be said to be well served in the way of medical attention and habilitation. Besides these several categories, friendly shopkeepers and friendly shops were put to advantage. These were availed for storing munitions, for the acceptance and delivery of messages and despatches. The shops were styled call offices. In some instances, guns could be dumped for a short period, in others deposited indefinitely. These served a very important purpose during the period and, in the extreme, played a big part in the activities and affairs of the I.R.A. Some of the proprietors, proprietresses or assistants of such shops or stores were not attached to the I.R.A. or kindred organisation in any way and nothing but sheer patriotism guided them in rendering service in that way. That fact was indeed a big consideration and allayed suspicion that they were friendly to or helping the I.R.A.

These were not the only people who gave help, succour and encouragement to the Dublin Brigade. It embraced all and many types, professions, trades and callings. Numerous examples of their splendid patriotic spirit were demonstrated. A few random instances, of which the writer had personal knowledge, may be cited. A railwayman working on one of the trains plying between Dublin and the south of Ireland called to Hoban's, Parnell Street. He had, so he said, an important despatch from an I.R.A. officer which he instructed to pass on to our Headquarters. The bearer of the despatch was trustworthy and no time was

lost in having the letter duly delivered to the right quarters. In another instance a man had been released from Mountjoy jail. Previously he had undergone hunger-strike, as a result of which he required a period of time for recouperment. Besides that there was the fear that he would be re-arrested, a not unusual procedure adopted by the British at the time. Luck favoured him and, unlike some others, he was not re-arrested at the jail gates. Brought to the home of good friends of the I.R.A./^{The Healy's} living on Phibsboro' Road, he was given food and shelter. After two or three weeks there, he undertook his journey to the country for the purpose of resuming service in the I.R.A.

Many an officer and man were familiar with the many and varied cases of kindness and generosity on the part of our friends and supporters among the civilian population. Every such gesture was appreciated by the men of the I.R.A. It must be understood, however, that every such transaction required the exercise of caution, discretion and secrecy between the people who rendered assistance and our own forces. Such people and places were not confined to any one area or section of Dublin. Our 1st Battalion had them in good number, all of which were utilised in various capacities as circumstances demanded. The risks those people ran, the difficulties they encountered, or the penalties involved, had no meaning for them when the only thing that mattered was the desire to "help the cause". Many of them could have been rich indeed had they acted treacherously and betrayed those men whom they harboured to the British authorities. There were many tempting baits and inducements but, in no instance, was the trust betrayed

or any overt act of treachery established. The integrity, sincerity and loyalty displayed by the people concerned helped immeasurably the I.R.A. Without support of that kind the I.R.A. would have been unable to continue the fight, or would have been very much hampered in its work, had it to rely exclusively and only on its own adherents and auxiliaries to provide safety and asylum to its wounded and wanted soldiers, as it was the assistance given by these people that was no less beneficial and praiseworthy than that accorded by our own.

Many other forms of support were given us by the friendly civilian population, not the least of which was financial assistance. Every appeal that had been made to them on behalf of the I.R.A. had received generous response. That was true in the early part of 1921 as at any other period of our existence. Indeed, through those several years they had contributed generously towards our arms funds and prisoners' dependants' fund. Of the latter it might be mentioned that many instances could be given of their self-sacrifice and kindness in coming to our aid for the sake of the women and children victims of British aggression. With the arrests, imprisonment or detention of such a large number of our men, the responsibility of providing for their dependents was growing apace. The fund to alleviate distress put a hard strain on the I.R.A. authorities and those who were charged with the task of dispensing it. In this connection the Irish White Cross played a magnificent and generous part towards the end in view, judging by the reports of the collectors who voluntarily gave their time and labour in soliciting subscriptions from the general public for the dependents' fund.

Great praise must be given to the Cumann na mBan for their meritorious work in that humanitarian work, making house-to-house collections for the purpose. Over a long period of time some of the collectors had worked up a regular clientele, making at least weekly calls on them for their contributions, or by means of street collections, raffles or drawings. Their work did not end there for, in many instances, these people had also to attend meetings of the Dependents' Fund as well as making visits to the homes of the dependents each week, for the purpose of disbursing the sums of money allotted to them and to report on the circumstances and wants of dependents.

In many cases the funds available were inadequate to bring sufficient succour to distressed people. Notwithstanding the splendid generosity of our friends in the United States of America, Australia and England itself and the subscriptions raised in Ireland, much poverty and privation were apparent. As most of the men of the I.R.A. were ordinary workaday people, depending on a weekly wage for a livelihood, the loss incurred by the relatives of the prisoners was incalculable and grave. Even in the face of real hardship, the people involved showed great spirit and a wonderful sense of duty and devotion to their menfolk and the cause generally. They bore their losses and their sufferings with the same fortitude, valour and devotion as the prisoners themselves. In so doing, they won the admiration and commendation of not alone the men of the I.R.A. but of the friends of Ireland everywhere. All were splendid; some perhaps more than others excelled even the men in courage, patience and resignation, not

only through that terrible phase but also during the previous five or six years. There were many who had had to face that terrible ordeal not once or twice but several times, when their loved ones had been snatched away from them and imprisoned for periods long or short because of the part they were playing in the independence movement. Due to the wonderful spirit of such brave women, the men made light of their sufferings and their burdens as prisoners or internees.

Of course, the men who had been arrested and incarcerated maintained their status and membership of the I.R.A., for, even as prisoners, they were required and generally did conform to military discipline. Theirs was perhaps the lesser but not unimportant role. They were only hors de combat in respect to active association in the fight that was being waged outside. As it was, they performed onerous and satisfactory service which called for heroism, constancy and patience of no mean order. Like us who were carrying on the fight outside prisons and camps, the prevailing standard of service permitted of neither laxity or inactivity. They and we had duties to perform in our own respective spheres and circumstances and were required to preserve the ties of camaraderie and to maintain the Volunteer spirit on any and every occasion. Each were tested in several ways, at different times and under diverse conditions. Theirs was none the less a supreme test of faith, devotion and loyalty to the ideals to which they had subscribed. By their behaviour, their every word and example would they be judged, but the main consideration suggested that they uphold our cause inside prison wall and behind barbed wires, and that

they continue to commune with their confreres who were conducting active fighting outside. In these respects the men were up to expectation. Their conduct as sentenced prisoners or internees was exemplary, praiseworthy and noble.

From the first moment of their arrests, the men behaved wonderfully and well. They had stood up to the many trials that had been imposed on them. Evidence had been forthcoming that at the period of their arrests star chamber methods had been conducted in many instances in the face of the most painful personal punishments and direct threats. Many stories were in circulation concerning the harsh treatment inflicted on some of our men at arrest or at various barracks, etc., to which they were brought after arrest. Physical violence was resorted to against some of the men in order to extract information from them both as to their own connection with the I.R.A. and their knowledge of associates and officers. Only men of great spirit and noble character could have survived the terrible ordeals and cruel torments of the fitful, artful application of "third degree" methods and "star chamber" practices which had become a not inconsiderable part of the policy of the British authorities to destroy the I.R.A. Never before perhaps were the men of the I.R.A. put on their mettle and never did they prove themselves to be truer men and truer patriots than during that eventful epoch.

The severance of the link that bound the individual Volunteer to the I.R.A. as produced by these arrests and eventual captivity had the opposite effect to that intended by the British. There was no gainsaying the fact that the loss of such men was indeed very keenly

felt by the I.R.A., not merely on account of the numbers involved as because of the influence it had on the fighting potentiality then showing signs of stiffening in the face of stern repression and utter violence exercised against our movement. One redeeming feature of the situation as represented by the arrest and incarceration of our men became clear. The men so affected were regarded as passing from one sphere of activity to another. True, the incarceration was the less spectacular of the two forms - the activity outside and inside the precincts of jails or internment camps - but it had its compensations, its value, just as it had some contributory effect on the general plan of resistance. Any weakening on the part of these men would have had damaging, deleterious repercussions on the fighting quality of our men outside. Instead, the two formed a united bloc against their assailants and their aggressors.

That there was no cessation in membership and comradeship between the two categories was proved to be a self-evident fact. Just as we outside maintained our association with the I.R.A., so in like manner the men in captivity were activated by the same motives. Jail or internment did not break their service nor destroy their discipline or esprit de corps. In every instance, they put themselves under the care of officers, or persons delegated to act as officers on their behalf, in the various camps to which they were assigned. Their domicile, therefore, conformed in every conceivable way to the high standard of service and duty to which these men were heirs in a good cause. The additional proof that these men were sound and loyal lay in the fact that, though being given every opportunity and encouragement

by their jailers to appeal against their internment, very few of them sought that means to secure their liberty.

Another aspect of the position of the Volunteers in captivity was that their names were never erased from their Companies' roll of membership, although for the time being they were considered to be casualties. It was noteworthy that Company officers submitted the names of the men of their units as they were arrested and, at later periods, to G.H.Q. for purposes connected with the dependents' fund and in order to keep a check up on general affairs of their continued service in our force.

Around the time in question the mounting roll of men of the I.R.A. captured by the British created many problems for every unit, large or small, in the Dublin Brigade, as it must have to other Brigades throughout the country. Up to date, the numbers incarcerated must have numbered tens of thousands. These included sentenced and unsentenced prisoners imprisoned and interned in various places in Ireland and England. So great were the numbers of arrests that the British had had to put all the prisons to use and, in addition, to create many large internment camps to contain them. Hence the names Ballykinlar and Curragh Camps became also household words. Such enormous losses on our part, though having a weakening effect on the numerical strength of the I.R.A., did not tend to have any great effect on the morale and fighting quality of those remaining outside.

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