ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BURO STAIRE MILENTA 1913-21

No. W.S. 897

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 897

Witness

Patrick Sarsfield (P.S.) O'Hegarty,
Highfield House,
Highfield Road,
Rathgar,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Supreme Council of I.R.B., 1910 - ;

Secretary, Department of Posts and Telegraphs, 1922-1944.

Subject.

Shooting of Sir Henry Wilson in London, 22nd June, 1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

File No. . . \$.49

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

The Shooting of Six Heury Lordson

When Si Henry Gilain was Shot, on Llew June, 1922, the atmosphere here has so time wife on local boukes that very little attention has groups who would to bring the Printer back, in the footed hope that that ame solve our on discussors, or else a Belfall from Crozed by the profrom there. The when, in the course of a week, every from here who might conceivably have been repossible had categorisely republished it, I was prizzled.) conduct herm i night han ben a strike London affair. an I revolve brygge that chen I saw Sam Magnise I med ark him: "Sam wer know", I said to myself.

ho botten, Duk and Jack, , were amongs the foremost consens is Lordon in the SAA and in 12 RB. my sid not have me Quei Leapre n Sinis Feri. Sam had been Suntany (The Diment Executive 4 the IRB de mi 9 joine d', and ? felt fang cutain - May I have met seem him for your - that after Duk Commercy's leaving Lorde in 1918 Sam and have been the main force in the IRB

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 897

how a phenomeum. They were from Dummaning, were but of they were hot downto to nationalism but, the Romer, they were " hishmen fines they were toom." The show bothers died in London of communition, and it also tuiled Sam after he came home.

Some him lake in 1522 it was conveyed from that it knew he a sort their to brancher of Sam to Dutlin. There was them a number of varancies in the Dutlin Sorting Office, due to men who preferred to so to Wan, in there were from large newsers of applicants from the The ride. The great anagements had not hem sected, but I aways for Samo however specially, at I hear afterwards that on Britis were loving for him a week after be left. And it was sometime in 1923, chem he was working as an asking clause open in of our other, that 7 pt an opportunity to speak to his almi the Gien humen.

Jonethy Mind in comment will his bounder, and when that had been derivored of, I said he had he "Sam, do you bear aughty about the Liebon humans"

(3

He said

"That do you want to term about "

I said

"The ded it"

He said

"he did it"

Wat well me stiffen up in homfield wardler. Saw and I worked in the closestamountain for 1803 T 1513, and we sporter the Same language. When he said we I hold him homeon the IRB. I said

Sing to god made new authorized

He was plent per munité au l'hum he said

" Colling Knew about of

I mene him - I said

" Ded he authorize it!

The world not say that, but he repealed

and nothing else une he say.

I has to leave it like that, but I said to myself that I ome time lake I got me come back in it. That I got he other opportunity. Saw is demined

from 14 00 for complining. Me army Muching — I was not y Dustin a opposed busing to convey it to him — and he vong him I saw him after that the was then I only the Somewhat he recommend their deminant in the light y his lighting y work for the charge. I be assume his most following that he had been in amountain with the muchiness but only hoping to present them for fory ahead with their polares. Cefter the deminant has comprised he test.

Den uns a member of Ben Kenned.

Den uns a member of the Ospangelin, a member of the the the the the the the the did such food work, in hard wife the the their, and a part of the the themen he was in Dublin, and that he has stoped with him, after his trimmal, while he went home. He was so claimed of the trent home. He was so claimed of the trent he came to the and one boy that he came to the and one boy that

There is not work what Sam had Said forme, and assor his whether he remend anything that were authorized it with his equally emphatic statement that much him equally emphatic statement that much know "about it.

after some premuer, he said home

") can hell you what hoppened, but only to your one private information. You must primise his neither to print it his use it

I fan de required promis, and he said " "Fralmy him Sam was mad to short hiem, because of the Rectar Poponer, and every hime he came over the preme mia for authority and Mile invariably represe. Part Sam punished. The last have be Saw him they have high words almit I am misk lost his telupen and flaved up an Said Food blass you, pet away to bell out y that and Ju like Som Test him the himset a word as, setting he has a Dutti served himes afternants he were went hear Mick was in an output state

this, I thought to ask ! Kelmand is allow her forest to state we had in current to statement to show that I the showed to show that I there is to there is to show that I be show that I bear to show the statement in record now.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

Saws om statement to me i proof of one

thing, was it was he who carried it out. Kenney's putter Statement explains what Proppled me abul sam's statement, and water the tragical Equeue entiel credible. Sony to Jan mice i he late Spring and early Summer of 1922, lived out, unitable, orahustene use work and responsibilit , some nen worm every day, and all the time brooding over the bounts that were breez them of his of being a tractor and So on (he was extremely bunking on that point) can be be their hopping just as Connedy desented it. I believe that that I have recorded does constitute the truth about this creteled burniers. It does not, I cannot, remove for their the reprosibility for it, but it does explain it. It is a sort of Such Trajety.

Than teen it stake that Sam cros of Britain. I don't believe that all. (he was alund certainly the hear of the Lower PRB.) an one have been instructed to been outof proteinly an strick to his own John, which was vital. I believe that Dunne and O'helivem arter under his instructions as hunters of the Organization, and hot as members of the his volunteers STATEMENT BY P.S. O'HEGARTY
Highfield House, Highfield Road, Rathgar, Dublin.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 897

The Shooting Of Sir Henry Wilson.

When Sir Henry Wilson was shot, on 22nd June, 1922, the atmosphere here was so tense with our local troubles that very little attention was paid to it. I thought it was either one of the groups who wanted to "bring the British back", in the foolish hope that that would solve our own dissensions, or else a Belfast group crazed by the pogroms there. But when, in the course of a week, every group here who might conceivably have been responsible had categorically repudiated it, I was puzzled. I wondered whether it might have been a strictly London affair, and I resolved to myself that, when I saw Sam Maguire, I would ask him. "Sam will know", I said to myself.

Sam was a London Sorter. He and his two brothers, Dick and Jack, - also Sorters - were amongst the foremost workers in London in the G.A.A. and in the They did not touch the Gaelic League or Sinn I.R.B. Sam had been Secretary to the Divisional Executive of the I.R.B. from the time I joined it, and I felt fairly certain - though I had not seen him for years - that, after Dick Connolly's leaving London in 1918, Sam would have been the main force in the I.R.B. The three brothers were a phenomenon. They were from Dunmanway, were Protestants, and Nationalists, i.e., they were not converts to nationalism but, like Rooney, they were "Irishmen since they were born". brothers died in London of consumption, and it also

killed Sam after he came home.

Some time later in 1922 it was conveyed to me that it would be a good thing to transfer Sam to Dublin. There were then a number of vacancies in the Dublin Sorting Office, due to men who preferred to go to England, and there were, of course, large numbers of applicants from the other side. The general arrangements had not been settled, but I arranged for Sam's transfer specially, and I heard afterwards that the British were looking for him a week after he left. But it was sometime in 1923, when he was working as an acting Clerical Officer in my own office, that I got an opportunity to speak to him about the Wilson business.

He had come in to see me about something official in connection with his transfer and, when that had been disposed of, I said to him -

"Sam, do you know anything about the Wilson business?"

He said -

"What do you want to know about it?"

I said -

"Who did it?"

He said -

"We did it."

That made me stiffen up in horrified incredulity. Sam and I worked in the closest association from 1903 to 1913, and we spoke the same language. When he said "we", I took him to mean the I.R.B. I said -

"Surely to God, Mick never authorized that?"

He was silent for a minute and then he said
"Collins knew about it."

I pressed him. I said - "Did he authorize it?"

He would not say that, but he repeated
"He knew about it."
and nothing else would he say.

I had to leave it like that, but I said to myself that some time later I would come back on it. But I got no other opportunity. Same was dismissed from the P.O. for complicity in the Army Mutiny - I was out of Dublin on official business at the time so that I was spared having to convey it to him - and the only time I saw him after that was when I asked the Government to reconsider his dismissal in the light of his lifetime of work for the Cause and, before I did so, asked him about He assured me most solemnly that he had the charge. been in association with the mutineers but only trying to prevent them from going ahead with their plans. After the dismissal was confirmed, he left Dublin and I never saw him again.

Then I bethought me of Ben Kennedy. Ben was a member of the Organisation, a member of the Intelligence Section inside the P.O. which did such good work, in touch with Mick, and a great friend of Sam's. I knew that Sam used to stay with him whenever he was in Dublin, and that he had stayed with him, after his

dismissal, until he went home. He was a Clerical Officer now in my own office and one day that he came to me on some official business I asked him about the Wilson affair.

I told him exactly what Sam had said to me, and asked him whether he knew anything that would reconcile Sam's refusal to say that Mick "authorized" it with his equally emphatic statement that Mick "knew" about it.

After some pressure, he said to me -

"I can tell you what happened, but only for your own private information. You must promise me neither to print it nor use it."

I gave the required promise, and he said -

"For a long time Sam was mad to shoot Wilson, because of the Belfast pogroms, and every time he came over he pressed Mick for authority and Mick invariably refused. But Sam persisted. The last time he saw him they had high words about it and Mick lost his temper and flared up and said, 'God blast you! Get away to hell out of that and don't bother me, and do whatever you like!'. Sam left him without a word and, although he was in Dublin several times afterwards, he never went near Mick again. When the thing happened, Mick was in an awful state."

Recently, owing to the current correspondence in the papers about this, I thought to ask Kennedy to allow me to record his statement to me but, on enquiry, I found he died in February, 1952, so that I feel I should put the statement on record now.

Sam's own statement to me is proof of one thing, that it was he who carried it out. Kennedy's further statement explains what puzzled me about Sam's statement, and makes the tragical sequence entirely credible. Anybody who saw Mick in the late Spring and early Summer of 1922, tired out, irritable, overburthened with work and responsibility, some new worry every day, and all the time brooding over the taunts that were freely thrown at him of being a traitor and so on (he was extremely sensitive on that point) can see the thing happening just as Kennedy described it. I believe that what I have recorded does constitute the truth about this wretched business. It does not, it cannot, remove from Mick the responsibility for it, but it does explain It is a sort of Greek tragedy.

I have seen it stated that Sam was "O.C., Britain".

I don't believe that at all. He was almost certainly
the head of the London I.R.B. and would have been
instructed to keep out of publicity and stick to his own
job, which was vital. I believe that Dunne and
O'Sullivan acted under his instructions as members of the
Organization, and not as members of the Irish Volunteers.

SIGNED: P.S. O'HEGARTY

DATE: 16th October, 1953.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 897