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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1013-21

BURD STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 903

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 903

Witness

Michael Cremen,
128 Lower Kimmage Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'E' Company, 4th Battalion Dublin Brigade
Irish Volunteers, 1913 - ;
Member of I.R.B. Dublin;
Captain - O/C. No. 1 Company, 5th Engineer
Battalion, 1919 .

Subject.

Shooting of Sir Henry Wilson in London,
1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.632

Form B.S.M. 2

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Statement by Michael Cremon,

128, Lr. Kimmage Rd., Dublin.

After the setting up of the Army Executive in the Four Courts I was sent by the Army Executive to London to put before the London Battalion their viewpoint on the treaty position. I was furnished with a document which was prepared by the Executive, setting out the Executive's reasons for their opposition to the treaty.

After I arrived in London I attended a meeting of the London Battalion. I explained the purpose of my visit to London, and I read the document I carried from the Executive. When I had finished I don't remember any of those present making any comment, except possibly Reggie Dunne. It was either at this meeting or immediately after it, that Reggie Dunne informed me that his chief concern was to prevent the split in the I.R.A. spreading to his London unit. This viewpoint of his was borne out by the fact that he sent despatches to both the Four Courts and Beggars Bush. I personally saw despatches which Dunne sent to Rory O'Connor at the Four Courts. In either a despatch which he sent to the Four Courts, or in a personal conversation with myself, he stated that he was also in communication with Beggars Bush.

The shooting of Sir Henry Wilson was debated at a meeting of the Army Executive immediately after

the shooting took place. My recollection of the discussion at the Executive is that whilst the Executive had no connection with the shooting and had no knowledge that it was being carried out, they ^{would} ~~could~~ not issue any denial of responsibility for it. At the Executive meeting which I attended as a member of the Executive, I asked the Executive for permission (or perhaps it was Rory O'Connor I asked) to go to London to explore the possibilities of rescuing the prisoners Dunne and O'Sullivan. I got the permission asked for.

On my arrival in London I found that the organisation of a rescue of the prisoners presented great difficulties. Because of my estimate of the calibre of the men comprising the London Battalion, I did not approach any of them regarding the projected rescue. The only I.R.A. members I approached initially were Paddy Fleming O/C Liverpool and a Lieut. O'Malley, also of Liverpool Battalion.

My first objective was to get reliable information as to when Dunne and O'Sullivan would be removed from Brixton to London for trial. I asked Art O'Brien to get this information from a Mr. McDonnell, the solicitor who had charge of the prisoners' defence. Before any information became available from O'Brien through McDonnell, I learned that Tom Cullen, one of the Beggars Bush officers, had come from Dublin to London for the purpose of effecting a rescue.

In view of the fact that Sam Maguire whom I knew to be in favour of the treaty, and that I placed

no dependance on the London crowd to carry out an operation of this kind, combined with the fact that the control of any arms in London would be available to Cullen, I came to the conclusion that Cullen and his crowd could carry out the operation easier in the matter of available resources than we could. I then sent Fleming and O'Malley to a meeting which Cullen had called in connection with the rescue. Both of those men when they reported back to me, assured me of the genuineness of Cullen's intentions. I then returned to Dublin to report on the position, which I did to the Executive. The Executive approved of my report on the position as I saw it.

My memory of what I heard in London immediately after Wilson was shot can be summed up as follows: After the split took place the bulk of the London Cumann na mBan went violently republican, and as they did not know the feelings of the London I.R.A. they - the Cumann na mBan - refused to co-operate with them. The Secretary of the Cumann na mBan informed the O/C, Reggie Dunne, of their attitude. As an instance of the Cumann na mBan's attitude, when Dunne inquired of the Cumann na mBan as to the identity of a person from Ireland who was looking for arms in London, he was told that they would give him no information. After this in a letter written by Dunne to the Secretary of the Cumann na mBan, Dunne asked the girls to have patience, that they would learn soon of activities. This letter was written on the eve of the Wilson shooting.

It was my opinion that the shooting of Wilson was carried out on I.R.B. orders issued before the truce 11/7/1921.

Signed: M. Cremen
(M. Cremen)

Date: 6/11/53
6/11/53.

Witness: John McCoy
(John McCoy)

Date: 6/11/53
6/11/53.

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