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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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Witness

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Rathmines,
Dublin.

Identity.

Organiser on staff of Volunteer Executive:
Organiser for I.R.B.;
Director of Trade and Commerce 1918-1922.

Subject.

(a) National activities, 1905-1923;
(b) Organisation of Irish Volunteers and I.R.B., 1913 - ;
(c) Dail Eireann, 1919 - .

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Statement by Mr. Ernest Blythe,

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and

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I had always wanted to learn Irish. I came to Dublin as a Boy Clerk in the Department of Agriculture in March, 1905, a week or two before I was sixteen. Within about an hour of coming to town I heard three people speaking Irish outside the Gaelic League book-shop, which occupied the building where Mackey's seed shop now is. Having stood looking at the books in the window and listening to the Irish-speaking group as long as they talked, I went in and bought the first book of O'Growney's Easy Lessons, which I began studying that night in the Queen's Theatre during the intervals of a melodrama called "The Lights of London", the first play I had ever seen.

For several months I was afraid to join the Gaelic League because I believed that if it were discovered that I was a Protestant I should be put out. On the other hand I began to feel myself bogged for want of a teacher. Ultimately when Dr. Douglas Hyde was setting out for America in the November of that year, and when a demonstration took place in O'Connell Street, I plucked up my courage and joined the Central Branch. My first teacher was Sinéad Ní Fhlannagáin, now Mrs. de Valera. Another teacher was Prionnsias Mac Ionnraich.

After I had been four or five months in the Branch carefully keeping myself to myself, I began to talk to a

class-mate, George Irvine, and he told me about Griffith's paper, "United Ireland". I had bought and read about three copies before publication ceased as a result of a law action. I became converted to Sinn Féin on the night I sat up reading my first copy of the "United Irishman".

Shortly afterwards I joined the Central Branch hurling club and in it became friendly with Seán O'Casey, the future dramatist. After we had known one another for some months, both of us being very bad hurlers and never getting on the team but practising zealously in the Phoenix Park every Saturday and going together to see the matches in which the club team played, Seán began to talk to me about the Fenians. One Saturday evening, coming home on the tram from the Phoenix Park, he said to me that it was a great pity that the Fenian organisation had not survived. I agreed. When we came to the end of Blessington St. he asked me to leave the tram as he wanted to talk to me. We walked up Hardwicke Street, and he proceeded to inform me that the Fenian organisation was still alive and was again recruiting young men. He asked me if I would join. Having read something about the Invincibles, I told him that I did not favour assassination and would have nothing to do with an organisation which countenanced it. Seán said that the Fenians were completely against assassination, and that their policy was to prepare to make open war on England. I thereupon told him that I should give him my answer the following week. Within a couple of days, however, I had made up my mind to join. When I told Seán I was willing, he said that, as I was a stranger to Dublin and unknown to the

people with authority in the organisation, I should be kept under observation for some months. I discovered afterwards that Seán had spoken to me in a moment of impulse without having got authority, and that the so-called period of observation was the period during which he was endeavouring to get authority to speak to me.

After a delay of several months Seán finally told me that I might now be sworn in. I met him in O'Connell Street and was taken to a house on the Western side of Parnell Square. A number of people were going up the stairs. I was introduced to Micheál Mac Amhlaidh and taken by him into a back room, where he administered the Oath to me. Afterwards I went with Seán into the front room while Micheál Mac Amhlaidh was swearing in some other new recruits. The front room was packed, I should say there were over a hundred people in it. When, at one point in the proceedings, new members were asked to stand up and let themselves be seen by the meeting, four or five of us rose.

Recruiting was going on very actively at the time. Within a few months, in fact, that particular Circle whose name in the world was the Bartholomew Teeling Literary and Debating Society, split into three.

Amongst those who were members of the Circle when I joined were Seán T. O'Kelly, George Nicholls, afterwards of Galway, Thomas Cuffe, who was a great friend of Arthur Griffith, Cathal Brugha and quite a number of people who were prominent in the Gaelic League, Louis Carrick, Proinnsias Ó Ceallaigh, Donnchadha Ó hEilighthe (saddler) Proinnsias Ó Ceallacháin and Con Collins.

I was just eighteen when I joined the I.R.B., and nothing much happened during the two further years I was in Dublin. The main activity was simply recruiting. The most outstanding thing I remember was a kind of mass meeting held in the Clontarf Town Hall. Several members of the organisation apparently had had conscientious scruples and had mentioned the fact of their membership in Confession, with the result that the priests had told them they must get out. Consequently a number of members were lost. The authorities of the organisation in Dublin thought of a way to stop the rot.

When suddenly one Sunday afternoon I was mobilised for the meeting in the Clontarf Town Hall that night, I was told that it was to hear a statement by a priest who was himself a member of the organisation. I saw a lot of people in the Hall whom I was astonished to learn were members. For example, Jack Shouldice who was over me in the Department of Agriculture and whom I had never suspected of being in the I.R.B. The priest was a Father O'Sullivan, (a brother I heard afterwards of Diarmuid Ó Duibhne) who was on the Mission in America. He was a member I gathered afterwards of Clan na Gael and not exactly a member of the I.R.B. I looked forward with some interest to hearing why he felt that the I.R.B. did not come under the classification of a condemned secret society. He did not touch on the point at all, but merely said he was a member, that he had no conscientious troubles, and proceeded to make a patriotic speech. The meeting, however, was quite effective, because we heard nothing more of members leaving for some time.

My service in the Department of Agriculture would have ended when I reached twenty years of age. As the critical date approached I had begun to try to get a job as a reporter on some newspaper and was finally engaged by the proprietor of the "North Down Herald" of Bangor about a month before I was twenty. I was told to contact Denis McCullough when I went North and he was informed that I was going to the Belfast neighbourhood. I then became a member of the Belfast Circle, which was very small, about fifteen members or so, and met in the workshop at the back of Denis McCullough's premises. At one period I was elected Centre of that Circle, which was the only office I ever held in the I.R.B. In addition to Denis McCullough Bulmer Hobson was the other leading member of the Circle. I introduced Seán Lester, who afterwards became Secretary of the League of Nations, into it. He brought in Alf Cotton, who was at one period a Volunteer organiser in Kerry. Cathal O'Shannon was another member. Archie Heron became a member later. Another member of the Circle was Dan Turley, who was shot as a spy by the I.R.A. about 1922 or 1923. He was quite a good fellow when I knew him. Still another member of the Circle was Harry Shiels who, curiously enough, was one of the guards who held Bulmer Hobson when he was arrested just prior to 1916. Harry Shiels was in the Rising in the Church St. area and got a bullet wound in the elbow, which caused him to lose his arm. Still another member of the Belfast Circle was Frank Wilson in whose house Seán McDermott had lodged.

The I.R.B. in Belfast was concerned mainly with recruiting, which proceeded slowly enough. We also had a

small arms fund, in imitation of the rifle fund which had been started by the I.R.B. in Dublin shortly after I left. As our membership was so small, however, and collections proceeded slowly we bought only automatic pistols. I think during my time that we did not succeed in raising the money for more than five or six of them, which were distributed amongst the members by lot.

Our outward activity was running the Dungannon Club. When I arrived in Belfast the Dungannon Club was in a state of suspended animation, and the only thing we could do for a period was to meet weekly in Denis McCullough's workshop, sitting on benches and on dismantled pianos, and paying a shilling each towards liquidating the debt. When we got the Club cleared we began public activities. We got rooms in Smithfield, held Irish classes, dances and weekly lectures for a period, but we were again financially disabled by defalcations by two of our officers.

The Dungannon Club helped the Fianna also, of which there were two Sluaighte in Belfast, an ordinary Sluagh and the only girls' Sluagh in Ireland. The girls' Sluagh was a terrible thorn in the side of the boys because its existence caused them to be nick-named "The Betsy Grays" up and down the Falls Road; but they were never able to get it abolished.

The principal function that I remember being organised by us was a lecture by Major MacBride which was very well attended and got a good deal of publicity. Actually circumstances at that time in Belfast were such that it was not possible to do much against the influence of Joe Devlin and the Hibernians on one side and the Orange mob on the other.

After some time I was asked by Denis McCullough and Bulmer Hobson to resign from being Centre of the Belfast Circle. They explained to me that it was to enable McCullough to be elected to a higher office. I believe that Denis McCullough, who was in touch with the surviving remains of the old I.R.B. through the North, was ultimately elected Ulster Representative, and that either he or Pat McCartan, I think the latter, was President of the I.R.B. at the time of the Rising. However, I heard only faint rumours of what went on in higher circles.

Early in 1913 I carried out a plan which had been in my mind for a year or so. I resigned from the paper in which I was working and set off for the Kerry Gaeltacht to try to get a job as a farm labourer, so that I could make some better progress with my study of Irish. On my way to Kerry I stayed a couple of nights in town with Bulmer Hobson and met Seán McDermott. I went from Dublin to Killarney, where I stayed a night with the Seabhac, and he gave me some letters of introduction to people in Dingle, Ventry and Dunquin.

On my first morning in Dingle I was hailed by a man with an English accent who had heard about me from Mrs. O'Shea (Eilís de Barra), on whom the Seabhac had advised me to call. The man was Desmond Fitzgerald, who had come to live at Ballintaggart, a mile outside Dingle, only three or four days before. I found that Mrs. Fitzgerald came from Donaghadee, where, as a reporter at Petty Sessions, I had often met her father who was an exceedingly cranky magistrate. I was with the Fitzgeralds practically every Sunday during the period I remained in Kerry.

With the Seabhac's letters of introduction I cycled round the country West of Dingle trying to get a job as a farm labourer, but, not unnaturally, I was received with politeness but no enthusiasm. People obviously thought I was a queer bird.

When I was beginning to wonder would I have to go back to newspaper work without much further delay, I got a letter from Seán McDermott telling me that he had been speaking to Tom Ashe, whom I did not know. He said that Tom had told him that his younger brother, Gregory, had gone to America just a couple of weeks before, and had left the family rather short-handed. He added that Tom had written to his brother John, who was in charge of the farm, telling him that I would probably be out to see him. I was much relieved to get the letter. I went out at once to Kinnard, which is about four miles East of Dingle. I saw the Ashes and arranged to come out there to work the following day.

Although I was brought up on a farm, I had not done any manual work for some years and found it exceedingly hard at first. Not only did my hands blister and give me trouble, but I was so sleepy at night that when I sat listening to people speaking Irish I could not keep awake.

Almost immediately I saw that, in a district like that, where Irish was beginning to disappear and where it was little spoken by the young people, if I spoke English at all the people would not be bothered listening to me trying to stammer along in Irish. Consequently on my first evening in Kinnard I decided that in no circumstances would I speak any English there. For the first few months

my resolution was hard to keep. I often had to wait three or four weeks before I got the Irish to say something I wanted to say, but I began rather quickly to understand what was said to me. I kept my resolution so well that Mairéad Ashe, a cousin of Tom Ashe, now Mrs. Geary of Limerick, meeting me in 1922 in Dublin said to me that that was the first time she had ever heard me speak English.

I went to the Ashes in April, 1913. At Christmas 1913 I went home to Belfast for about three weeks. During that time I spoke in the Dungannon Club, and on my way back I spent about a fortnight in Dublin.

During the time I was in Dublin I went to several Volunteer drills and learned at any rate the mystery of forming fours.

When I got back to Kerry I found that although Volunteer Companies were being formed throughout the country it was hard to get much done in the Dingle neighbourhood.

Meantime the Partition issue became very much alive and in March I was written to by Seán McDermott and asked to go up to Belfast to work on an anti-partition campaign which was to be started there. Whatever funds were needed were provided by the I.R.B. Denis McCullough was in charge and I was supposed to write and speak and organise generally.

We decided at once to have anti-partition meetings on the Falls Road. A lot of people said that we should be stoned by Joe Devlin's supporters, and that much more harm than good would result. Joe Connolly was so strongly of this opinion that he refused to participate in our work.

We were ourselves considerably impressed by the arguments. However, as the I.R.B. authorities had decided that the campaign was to start, we arranged to go ahead. We got a coal-lorry from a friendly owner, had it drawn out into a suitable side street off the main road and started our first meeting, having put up placards a day or two in advance.

A very big crowd came to listen to us. We attacked Partition strongly without saying anything against Joe Devlin, and got a very good reception.

We held a number of similar meetings and had no trouble anywhere. We got a Labour man called, I think, Campbell to speak with us at one meeting, but apart from him the meetings were addressed by Denis McCullough, myself, Archie Heron, a cousin of Archie's called Ralph Bullick, and two or three young members of the Dungannon Club.

We sent out roneographed circulars against Partition to all the Nationalist papers in the North, and succeeded in getting a little publicity, naming ourselves, I think, the Anti-Partition Association. However, it was clear after a couple of months that we could not alter the general complexion of political affairs in Belfast, and that there was nothing more to be done at that juncture. I then went back to Kerry. Meantime I had been at some drills run by the Fianna and by the Volunteers.

When I arrived in Kerry the Volunteers had got going in Dingle, with Desmond Fitzgerald on the committee.

He succeeded in forming a Company at Ventry, and Paddy Devane and some others came from Dingle to Lispole and started a Company there. I joined, and for several Sundays we drilled outside the church after Mass, our drill instructor being an ex-militia man whose knowledge was rudimentary. When we had been forming fours and so on for about two or three Sundays he got confused on one occasion and gave some wrong orders, so that the girls of the parish, who were standing on a bank opposite us watching the proceedings, were shrieking with laughter. I was smitten with a sudden rage, and did what a local man could not have done. I left my place in the ranks, ordered the militia-man to step into the vacant space, and proceeded to carry on the drill. From that moment, without further formality, I was Captain of the Lispole Company.

A little time after the shooting of the Austrian Archduke and when it had been apparent that war had become likely, Paddy Devane came out from Dingle to Kinard on a motor bicycle to say that the Ó Rathaille was at his bungalow in Ventry and wanted to see me urgently. I left the hayfield, put on my Sunday suit and cycled over to Ventry where I stayed the night with the Fitzgeralds, coming over to the Ó Rathaille in the morning. After greeting me he took out a wad of notes, laid it on the table, told me that he had come from Dublin specially to see me, that war would start in a day or two and that he wanted me to go instantly to Germany via Denmark, to represent to the German Government that I spoke on behalf of the leading members of the Volunteer Executive and to ask for arms for the Volunteers and for the formulation of

a plan for joint action. Pointing to the notes on the table the Ó Rathaille said there was no time to be lost as travel might at any moment become difficult if not impossible, consequently he had brought the money for my travelling expenses with him. Now I knew that Ó Rathaille was not in the I.R.B. and would not be aware what that organisation was arranging. I felt sure that the matter of contact with Germany was being attended to, and I also realised that I could not undertake a mission of the kind suggested without the consent and direction of the I.R.B. I told Ó Rathaille there were people in Dublin whom I would have to consult before I could go to Germany and that, therefore, I could not set off instantly. He was both disappointed and angry and, as I heard afterwards, formed the opinion that I was frightened.

For some weeks after I had made myself Captain of the Lispole Company about seventy to ninety men generally fell-in on a Sunday when I blew the whistle after Mass. The shooting at Bachelors Walk after the landing of the Howth guns produced an immediate reaction among the old people. Mothers and fathers urged their sons not to have anything to do with a movement which looked more like being dangerous than it had heretofore appeared. Talk went round of evictions and house-burnings, and of how mobs of police had carried out a coercion campaign. The following Sunday when I blew the whistle not more than forty men took their places in the ranks. After a short while, however, the numbers began to grow slowly again.

At the end of about a month there came a Sunday on which, for various reasons, it had been decided to have

no parade. About the time Mass commenced I was in Ashes' house writing. Paddy Devane came out from Dingle on a motor-bicycle and told me that the Cahirciveen Volunteers were coming over by boat to Dingle, and he asked me to bring the Lispole men into Dingle to increase the size of the local parade which would meet them. I had barely time to put on a collar and get down on my bicycle to Lispole church. As I arrived, people were already coming out from Mass. I threw my bicycle into a house opposite the chapel and blew my whistle. Some of the Volunteers had already gone off in the direction of Annascaul. However, I got most of them, and, although they were astonished at being called to fall-in when a contrary arrangement had been made, they took their places in the ranks.

I was afraid that a lot of them might not want to go to Dingle, as they would have no money in their pockets and would be in difficulties about getting a meal, so I proceeded with the usual elementary drill and then marched them along the road in the direction of Dingle. When they had gone some distance I noticed a tendency to murmur, so I kept shouting that there must be no talk while they were marching to attention. When we had gone about a mile on the way I fell-out the men, told them the facts, and urged them to come to Dingle. Only about two said they must go home; the remainder fell-in again and we marched the four miles to Dingle.

The boats were already at the Quay and the Iveragh men were coming ashore when we arrived. I had no time to speak to anybody until the parade through the town

began. When we arrived at the Mall all the Volunteers were formed up, and, for some reason which I never fathomed, Jackie O'Sullivan, a young publican in the town, came to me and asked me to say a few words of welcome to the Iveragh men. I had no experience of open-air speaking at the time, and I had no opportunity to collect my thoughts. As I climbed up on a heap of stones to address the crowd, Seán Óg, known as "Seán a Chóta", a brother of Kurger Kavanagh of Dunquin, asked me what I was going to say. I said, "I don't know", but I was conscious that a great opportunity had been offered to me and that my knees were shaking with excitement. The next moment I heard myself saying that if the Germans came as enemies we would do our best to resist them, but that if they came to help us to throw off the English yoke we would flock to their standards. After a few other remarks, I called on the All-Merciful God to crown the German Eagles with victory. I noticed that the R.I.C./who were present were looking as black as thunder, and I thought that they would move forward to arrest me.

Desmond Fitzgerald was in the parade with about fifty or sixty men from Ventry, and at the end of my first sentence he led them in a cheer. That was taken up by other groups, and I was four or five times cheered by the whole crowd.

When I got down off the heap of stones, some of the police took a step or two towards me, then there was some consultation among themselves and they made no further move.

The substance of my speech got considerable publicity,

and I believe that it was it which caused Seán McDermott, a few weeks later, to send for me to take up the post of organiser for the I.R.B.

After this meeting, Desmond Fitzgerald, Seán Óg and I held several meetings throughout the area, at which we spoke in the strongest terms in favour of a German-Irish alliance.

At the end of about three weeks or so, a big parade of Volunteers was arranged to take place at a sports meeting to be held at Annascaul. Just before that, Seán McDermott wrote me and asked me to meet Austin Stack at Lispole station where he would be on his way to Dingle on some court business. I met Stack as requested, and he asked me to swear into the I.R.B. some men whom I could trust, and get a Circle going either in Lispole or in Dingle. I swore in a local man called Griffin, who was living on the other side of the valley from Kinnard.

Just before the Annascaul meeting I decided to swear in Desmond Fitzgerald. I went into Dingle the night before and spoke to Alf Cotton, who was instructor for the Volunteers in Tralee and had come with a man called Mullens to Dingle to see the Volunteers there. He had been a member of the Circle with me in Belfast, and he approved of swearing in Desmond, whom we asked to try to get men in Ventry.

We went out by train with the Dingle Volunteers next morning as far as Lispole. We then left the train. My men in Lispole were assembled at the station, and we marched on to Annascaul. Without "by your leave" from

the sports committee we held a meeting in the field and administered the United Irishmen's Oath to all in the crowd who were willing to put up their hands and take it. Seán Óg made a very good speech in Irish.

I got home at about twelve o"clock that night, and as I had only had a bun and a sandwich since the previous evening I never felt as tired as I did climbing the hill to Kinnard.

The morning post brought a letter from Seán McDermott asking me to go immediately to Dublin. I obeyed the instructions, wiring Desmond Fitzgerald from Tralee.

When I got to Dublin Seán told me that he wanted me to go North, taking the Counties Antrim, Derry, Donegal and Tyrone, to contact the old I.R.B. there and to try and work up recruitment and to form new Circles. It was judged at that time impossible to do anything with the Volunteers because of the split caused by Redmond. Actually that view was correct. The Belfast Volunteers during the three or four months that I had been in Kerry from the time we had held the anti-partition meetings, had fallen away almost to nothing, and further defections were occurring every day. In fact Denis McCullough said to me that the position was that practically nobody in Belfast would remain in the Irish Volunteers now unless he held officer rank. He said he foresaw the time when they would have to advertise in the newspapers for a good steady private who would not look for promotion. Clearly any work that could be done at that time, say about October, in the North would have to be done underground

and with very small numbers.

I was instructed by Seán McDermott to work under the general direction of Denis McCullough, who was the Ulster Representative on the Supreme Council. McCullough gave me odd names of men all over the place whom he knew to be or to have been active in the I.R.B. I tried first round the Aughagallon area on the shores of Lough Neagh, close to where I was brought up. Of course, my name was not a recommendation there, as an uncle of mine, who was known to have been a Unionist, had lived near the place, and I saw that I was not fully accepted by the two or three people who represented the old I.R.B.

I then went to Toomebridge. One of the first people on whom I was requested to call was Mick Lennon, a half-brother of Robert Johnson the father of Eithne Carbery, the poetess. Mick Lennon was about eighty years of age at the time, and was living in a small wayside public-house. When I went to see him there was nobody else in the house. He greeted me in a very friendly way, and proceeded to give me all the information he could about the members of the I.R.B, in the locality. While we were talking we heard drums in the distance. Not knowing the area I thought they were Orange drums. Mick Lennon told me, however, that they were Hibernians and that they would be passing by his house. He thereupon put up the shutters and put out the lights, saying that he did not want to serve "them fellas". The drums stopped outside the door and thirsty men knocked, but both Mick Lennon and I sat quietly in the kitchen until they went away. He was in the original Fenian movement, and told me of a meeting in the

Toomebridge neighbourhood attended by James Stephens. While the meeting was in progress a sergeant of the R.I.C. stepped in. Stephens drew a pistol, thinking it was a raid. The sergeant, however, was a member of the organisation and had been delayed in putting in an appearance.

I went to see two or three of the people whose names Mick Lennon gave me, and I formed a rather poor opinion of the remains of the I.R.B. There were only one or two senior members in the neighbourhood, and, while they were very good fellows, I saw that all they were doing was maintaining a tradition, and that it would never be possible to get them to make much of a public move. Apparently what had happened in that area and in adjoining areas across the river in County Derry ever since the Fenian time, was that all the young fellows who had a National outlook were sworn into the I.R.B. when they grew up, and that all of them, or practically all of them, left it when they got married. The only thing that the I.R.B. did there was to keep alive a feeling of dislike and distrust of the Hibernians and of the Parliamentary movement, and to cause a few young people to read "Sinn Féin" or "Irish Freedom".

Outside Toomebridge on the Derry side I found some rather better people. There was Hugh Gribbin and his brother Charlie Gribbin. There was also a very live young lad in the village of Ballymacpeake. There was Hugh McGurk in Guladuff. The only part of County Antrim where there were I.R.B. was the Toomebridge area. It was a little more widespread in South Derry, but almost the same sort of people were in it. However, there was already,

as a result of the war, a certain tendency to avail of the change in public opinion and to take in new members.

In the Magherafelt area I met Louis Smith, who had been prominent in the Land League and in the National League. He was then a very old man. He introduced me, however, to a young relative called Larkin, whom I swore into the I.R.B., and who, I think, was executed during the Civil War.

I worked for some time around the Magherafelt-Maghera area and got in touch with not only the older members of the I.R.B. but a few younger men who promised to try and build it up.

In Derry city there was actually a Company of Irish Volunteers, and I addressed them in their hall, but they, like the Belfast Volunteers, were actually still getting weaker; members were deserting and going over to the National Volunteers, or joining the British Army.

In Strabane there were two or three friendly people who were inclined to make some move, but thought it premature.

In Donegal I found nothing along the northern part of the County. There was a station-master, Dan Kelly, in Cashelnagore who had his rifle and who was a member of the I.R.B., but he was a Derry man and could do nothing locally. Between Cashelnagore and Gortahork there lived a Gaelic League organiser called Hugh Duffy who was a Sinn Féiner, but he said that nothing could be done at the time. I went on to Gweedore, where I had the names of a couple of old I.R.B. men, but the only advice they gave me was to

get out by the first train next morning. I found it impossible to do anything at all in that area, and left after about a week. I got quite a friendly reception at Creeslough from a man called McBride who had once been defended by Pádraig Pearse many years before when he was prosecuted for having his name in Irish on his cart. I went to his house and talked with himself, his brother and some neighbours who had a good enough National outlook, but they could not get anything done at that time. Hibernianism was rampant and practically all the people were following the old Irish Party.

I walked one day from Creeslough to Glen, and there met a shop-keeper named McFadden, who had been recommended to me by McBride. McFadden was very nationally minded, but told me that the whole opinion of the place was such that nothing could be done.

It was while I was in Creeslough that the police, who had been looking for me since I left Kerry, caught up with me. As I passed the barracks in Creeslough the sergeant came out with a constable and asked me my name and other particulars. From that time onwards I was seldom free of a police trailer.

After leaving North Donegal I went down to the Stranorlar-Ballybofey area and met a Singer's Sewing Machine agent called Cassidy, who knew a big number of people. He introduced me to various individuals who were willing to join the I.R.B. I swore them in and left the nucleus of two or three small Circles. Amongst the people whom I remember were a publican in Ballybofey

called Broadbent, who I do not think was very active afterwards, a blacksmith called Johnny McShane in Raphoe, and the sexton of the Cathedral in Letterkenny, whose name has escaped me.

Going to South Donegal I met the representatives of the old moribund Fenian Circles in Donegal town, in Inver and in Mountcharles area. It was nearly as bad as the North of the County, and, although I got agreement to have one or two young men sworn into the Circles, the impression left on me was that nothing would happen in Donegal for some time. I visited some small meetings in Tyrone, a few miles out from Strabane, including one at Sion Mills, but it was the same story everywhere. Those who "followed MacNeill", as the saying was, were in a hopeless minority, and the followers of Redmond were everywhere on top. However, even within the comparatively short period during which I travelled over from Toomebridge through Derry, North, Mid and South Donegal, some change began to take place. I got a letter from Hugh McGurk saying that he wanted me to address a meeting at Gulladuff. He apparently had been active, had raked up all the past members of the I.R.B., and had got some new members in, and was prepared to go ahead.

We held the meeting in the dead of night in the middle of a bog. There seemed to me to be forty or fifty present, and we actually discussed the possibilities of coming out in the open with the formation of a Volunteer Company.

Before I went East to Gulladuff I had, in

conjunction with Denis McCullough, arranged a public pro-Sinn Féin, pro-MacNeill meeting at Toomebridge. I asked McCullough to let me have a speaker from Belfast, as I would be unable to get anyone locally.

When I reached the little hotel in Toomebridge after the meeting in the bog at Gulladuff which had ended with a man being nearly drowned in a six-foot bog-hole, I found Herbert Moore Pim awaiting me. I had never met him before, but had known of him and had occasionally noted things which he had written under the name "A. Newman". He was quite young, but produced a recent photograph of himself wearing a full black beard. He asked me who the photograph reminded me of, but I had not the clue. He then told me that when he spoke at a meeting at Waterford he created a tremendous sensation because the people thought it was Parnell come alive again.

Pim suggested that we leave a note in the kitchen addressed to Father Nolan, the P.P., and ask the people of the hotel to deliver it before Mass next morning. I agreed and Pim wrote a letter asking Father Nolan to announce our meeting for the following afternoon from the altar. We left the note on the kitchen table, and it was duly delivered. When Pim went to Mass he had the pleasure of hearing Father Nolan denounce us in the most violent terms.

We duly arrived in the afternoon at the old Temple of Liberty, Toome. A small crowd of the I.R.B. element gathered around us. Father Nolan held an opposition meeting, which was twice or three times as big, a few yards

away. Nevertheless we were satisfied, because for the first time since the Volunteer split we had really come into the open in a place outside Belfast and Derry.

On the whole, the period I spent as I.R.B. organiser was not very fruitful, although I think some good came of it afterwards. I was very glad when I got a letter from Bulmer Hobson saying that the Volunteer Executive had appointed me as organiser for the Volunteers, and requesting me to go to Dublin to meet the staff before proceeding to the South.

I went down to Dublin immediately after Christmas and found for the first time that there was some clash between Hobson and Seán McDermott. Apparently Seán was not too pleased that I had been, as it were, taken off the I.R.B. work and transferred to the Volunteers.

I found that "Ginger" O'Connell, Liam Mellows and I had all been appointed and were being assigned to different areas. We spent most of the day talking with Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett, as members of the staff, and with Hobson as Secretary of the Volunteers. One of the things that interested me was a purely theoretical and informal discussion, which took place during an interval of the Volunteer business, on the question of accepting a German prince as King of Ireland instead of insisting on a Republic, as the acceptance of a prince would make the Germans, whose victory we all anticipated, more likely to insist on the complete independence of Ireland. There was some division of opinion in the group, but there was, on the part of some at least, a willingness to consider such a solution should the need arise.

I had never met Joseph Plunkett before this, and was interested to hear him say that if and when we got independence, the post which he would most wish to have in an Irish Government would be that of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I set off for Cork with instructions to see Tomás MacCurtain and Terry MacSwiney. I went to Tomás MacCurtain's place of business and was told he had left, but was given his private address. I found that the house was his mother-in-law's, and she told me that he had opened business on his own account that day and gave me the address of his shop in, I think, Blackpool. I saw him there, but he was too busy to talk to me for long. He arranged, however, that I should go to the Volunteer Hall that night when a general meeting was being held.

I saw Terence MacSwiney later in the evening, and had a long talk with both himself and MacCurtain immediately before the Volunteers assembled.

Up till then the Volunteers in Cork had been under control of an Executive with a President. It was desired to choose a Commandant and put the organisation on a military basis. Dermot Fawsitt, now Judge Fawsitt, had been President of the Executive, and he reckoned as a civilian. I gathered that there had been difficulties between him and MacCurtain and MacSwiney, who represented the military point of view.

I was introduced to the meeting as the representative of Headquarters, and directed my speech towards securing that the policy advocated by MacSwiney and MacCurtain would be carried out.

I remained round Cork for some time, but there was really very little to be done. I think the Volunteers in Cork who were, as they were called, MacNeillites did not number much more than 100, or 120 at the outside. I went with Tomás MacCurtain one night and addressed some men in a hall in Blarney, but there, I think, the local group did not number more than twenty, and seemed very dispirited.

There was nominally a Company in Mallow. I visited them, and formed a very poor impression of them, although there were perhaps forty to fifty in the hall. They were doing no drilling. They had no rifles, and seemed to do nothing but gather together a few nights in the week. After a time one of the members confided the secret of the whole business to me - there was a back way from the hall into one of the public-houses, and membership of the Volunteers was a means of getting drink easily after hours. As this member said frankly to me, "We are only in the Volunteers to get a "wet".

In Mitchelstown, however, there was a very good Company of forty or fifty men with good people in charge of them, and they had rifles. Mitchelstown was the only Company of Volunteers worthy of the name to be found in County Cork, outside Cork City, at the time.

I went to Kinsale, where I had been told that Eamon O'Neill would help me, but I found it utterly impossible to contact him. I gathered from one or two of the people in the town that he had temporarily gone anti-German, as it were, and that I should be able to get no help from him. I saw his brother Phil once or twice. The

position seemed to be so bad in Kinsale that I had to give up hope of forming a Volunteer Company. Seán Hales owned a steam-engine and wagons and was engaged in some sort of a contracting job in Kinsale at the time. He advised me to go over to see his brother, Tom, at Ballinadee. I went to Bandon and walked out from Bandon to Ballinadee. When I asked for the Hales's house I was directed to the house of relatives who were, I understand, Protestants and Unionists, and who received me very coldly. However, they told me where to find Tom Hales. Tom, his brother and sisters were very enthusiastic. Tom had actually taken some steps to get a Volunteer Company going in Ballinadee. We arranged that I should come out the following Sunday, and that we should march to Kilbrittain and try to stir up something there. I remember when the people came out from Mass at Ballinadee, Tom Hales shouted for the Volunteers to fall-in. When they had numbered off, he was so new to even the elements of volunteering that his order to form fours was given in this form: "Let ye form fours now".

I went to many other places in Cork, Kanturk, for example, where I had the name of a man, also across the border to Rathmore in County Kerry, where there was a Dan O'Donoghue, who was a strong Sinn Féiner. He was a porter at the railway station. He told me, however, that apart from himself and his brother there was nobody in Rathmore at the time who would be on our side. His brother Michael was with me in Belfast jail afterwards and later became a Superintendent in the Guards.

I visited Fermoy, where I had the name of a barber

called Shea. He was a very amusing talker. He told me that he had taken the beard off Stephen Gwynn when the latter had joined the British Army in the so-called Irish Brigade, and asked me officially if he had been wrong not to cut Gwynn's throat when such a good opportunity offered. I solemnly assured him that he had made a great mistake in letting Gwynn go. However, in spite of his amusing talk he could find me nobody in Fermoy who was prepared to make any move towards forming a Company of Irish Volunteers.

Generally speaking, the position in County Cork was nearly as bad as it could be. I cannot say that I succeeded in doing anything worth while in the week or two I spent in Cork, except in stirring up recruiting a bit in Mitchelstown and helping Tom Hales a little bit in drilling the Company which he had established, as well as arousing some interest in the adjoining parishes.

I next proceeded to County Kerry, which was definitely better. I went first to Dingle, where I found the Volunteer Company active and growing in strength. There was also quite a good Company in Ballyferriter, and contingents came in from the surrounding area.

In Tralee the Volunteers had a good number of rifles. They had an excellent drill hall in the old skating rink, and they had a Belfast man, whom I knew and who had been dismissed from the Labour Exchange, as drill instructor. Although there was hostility in the town, Sinn Féin was definitely on the up-grade.

I went, on Austin Stack's recommendation, to Castlegregory and met a very enthusiastic girl named Susie Dillane in the little hotel there. She sent for Tadhg Brosnan for me, and after a talk he met me later with three or four others. He arranged to do some canvassing, and when I came back at the end of a week he had a meeting, out of which I got twenty-eight men to enrol as Volunteers, and we marched up and down through Castlegregory to proclaim that a start was being made.

With Alf Cotton, the Tralee instructor, I succeeded in forming a small group in Camp, between Tralee and Annascaul. I also got a good Company going in Annascaul itself. I remember the public reaction to the pro-German propaganda which the police used. There were about thirty to forty men in the Annascaul Company, and in the course of a Sunday morning drill I was marching them up the street. At that time I always marched behind a Company of Volunteers, as that was the only sure way to prevent talk and also to prevent occasional desertion. Two little girls, nine or ten years of age, in shawls were standing with their mouths open watching the men march past. As I approached, one nudged the other and said, "That's the German now". I found that it was being put out all over Kerry that I was a German.

Moving from the Dingle and Tralee area, I found a fairly good Company in Killarney, which up to that time had remained neutral. I spoke to the principal members of it privately, and was invited to speak to the Company, with the result that it voted unanimously for MacNeill.

Kenmare was a black spot. I went there twice, but was not able to get more than four or five men, who were found for me by the local Irish teacher. They were afraid to meet me anywhere in the town, and I had to go out a country road and into a field to talk to them. I had to give up the hope of starting a Volunteer Company there.

In Killorglin I had the name of a man who was supposed to be a leading Sinn Féiner. He had a cobbler's shop, and when I called and told him who I was and what I wanted he said that the only advice he could give me was to take the first train out of Killorglin. A Miss Cotter and a sister of Fionán MacCollum had a school in the town which had been started by Tom O'Donnell, M.P. As the school had a good name for Irish I judged that they would be favourable and went to see them. They made me stay for tea and I spent the evening with them, but they were unable to give me the name of anyone likely to join the Volunteers, much less make an effort to get others to join. I left Killorglin then and did not go back.

I had the names of two or three people in Fyries a very small village near Castleisland. I cycled out there towards evening, having done a good deal of cycling earlier in the day, and made up my mind that whatever the place was like I should stay the night. I asked about digs in two or three houses and finally found lodgings. I then went up the street to the people whose names I had. One of them was O'Sullivan, a relative, I believe, of Eugene O'Sullivan who had been an M.P. for

Kerry. He repeated the advice I had been given in Killorglin, he told me to get my bicycle and get out of the place. The other man whose name I had been given was a little more friendly, but told me that nothing at all could be done there. If I had not already arranged lodgings I think that, although I was tired, I should have cycled back to Tralee.

I went into my digs and got my tea, and afterwards strolled up the street. A number of young men were playing bowls and about ten or fifteen others were watching them. I sat on the ditch watching the play, and after a time began to speak to the people beside me. My accent showed I was a stranger. There was some curiosity, and soon I was chatting away with half a dozen. Before long the question of the war came up, and I spoke strongly against the British and for the Germans. There was a good deal of quite friendly argument, and finally I moved off. A man followed me immediately and told me that his name was Paddy Breen, that he was a member of the Kerry team and that he was in favour of the MacNeill Volunteers. I spent a good while talking to him, and we arranged that next morning we would go out to see some people whom he thought likely to help. We spent the following morning cycling out. Amongst those I met was young Rice, who became prominent afterwards. We went into a field where he was ploughing and walked up and down with him for a while. Finally I left with the arrangement that I would come back to try to start a Volunteer Company after Mass the following Sunday.

I arrived back as arranged, and when the people

came out from Mass I stood up on a ditch and addressed them. Having made all the usual appeals to them to join the Volunteers I finally asked those who were willing to join to fall-in, and we got about thirty. I returned several times to see that Company and it held together and flourished.

In Cahirciveen there was one of the best Companies in the County. They had a good number of Volunteers, and had actually some forty rifles. The leader of everything in Cahirciveen was a teacher and the owner of a substantial drapery establishment - Diarmuid O'~~Sullivan~~ CONNELL. He had a place for hiding the rifles behind the shelving in his shop. The rifles were usually taken out on Saturday night for the Sunday parade, were left back into his shop late on Sunday night by the Volunteers, and were put away behind closed shutters by himself late at night. A large number of rolls of cloth had to be taken out, then a panel was removed and there was a short stairs down to a small room which he had made and in which the rifles were stacked.

There was no other Company near Cahirciveen at the time, and, although we conducted some route marches out into the country, we did not succeed in forming one. But compared to Cork, Kerry at the beginning of 1915 was extremely good. There were half a dozen active Companies in the Dingle Peninsula, the Dingle Company having twenty or thirty rifles. There was a so-called Battalion in Tralee with perhaps one hundred men. They also had a number of rifles. There was a fair-sized Company in Killarney, a very good Company in Cahirciveen,

and there was a small Company in Castleisland. There was also a sort of a Company in Listowel. In all cases the Kerry Companies were growing, and it was obvious that in a lot of places it would be possible to form new Companies very soon.

From Kerry I went on to Limerick. At that time there was a Limerick County Executive which consisted of a representative from each Company, or Company area, in the County, of which the President was Father Tom Wall. A lot of the Companies were not very strong, in fact some of them had a rather nominal existence, but the situation everywhere throughout the County was improving. Robert Monteith, who had been dismissed from his job in Islandbridge and had been employed as instructor by the Volunteer Executive, had just come down from Dublin and was operating in Limerick City. One of the things that I undertook on reaching Limerick County was to organise Companies outside the city which he might visit from time to time, and to whose officers, when they had been elected, he might give instruction which they could pass on to their men.

The Volunteers in Limerick were well situated, because they had possession of the Fianna Hall, which had been built largely with the assistance of John Daly and which was situated at the back of his house in Barrington St. It was not a very large hall, but drill was possible in it for a small number of men, and instructions on semaphore, Morse and map-reading, as well as all the other class subjects, could be very conveniently carried on in it.

M.P. Colivet was in charge of the Company in Limerick and I remember at the time it was supposed to be a great advantage to have him, because he was employed in the Shannon Foundry and had been able to get pikes made for the men for whom no firearms of any sort could be obtained. I think he also made a type of bayonet which could be fitted on to a shotgun.

Immediately outside Limerick at Killonan there was a very good Company run by Batt Laffan, the man who later sheltered Monteith after 1916 until he was got away to America.

After visiting some Companies, or alleged Companies, in Foynes and nearer to Limerick City, I went to the West of the County. There was a very small Company under Father Tom Wall at Drumcollogher. I was able to get recruiting going and increase its numbers. I spent a good deal of time round Newcastle West, but found it impossible to form a Company in the town, although the two curates, Reverend Michael Hayes, (brother of Dr. Richard Hayes) and Reverend John Kelly, were very friendly and very anxious to have one. However, I was more successful outside the town. In Monagay, the adjoining parish, to which Con Collins belonged, we succeeded in getting a very good Company. In Rathkeale we succeeded in getting a very small group together. I had a meeting, and with the aid of a very young lad called Jack Finn got a dozen or sixteen together. However, when, some Sundays afterwards, we arranged to march to Ardagh to try and stir up that area, bringing Volunteers from Monagay and a few from Newcastle West to make a display, I found

that only eight of the Rathkeale lads turned up to march. As I was going down the street with eight men behind me in two's and the people laughing at us, the owner of the biggest drapery shop in town, Jack O'Mahoney, stepped out from the side-path, took his place beside me and marched at the head of the lads out of the town. Although we were not able to put up a very good show at Ardagh, we nevertheless roused enough local interest to get a Company formed there.

In Templeglantyne, which was said to be notable among the parishes of Ireland because there was not in it a Protestant, a policeman or a public-house, we ultimately succeeded in getting a fairly good Company going. The first time I went, although I met a few people who were friendly, I failed to induce them to start a Volunteer Company, but immediately after that, Tom O'Donnell's paper published a strong attack on me, stating that I was paid £600 a year by Carson, and that my object in Kerry was to entrap the young men into the Volunteers for the purpose of having their names available when conscription should be applied by the British. O'Donnell published a lot of attacks of that kind, with the result that when I went back to Templeglantyne after an interval of a month, the meeting, which our few local supporters had advertised by hand-written notices, was well attended. After I had spoken I succeeded in getting the usual forty or so young men to fall-in and form a Volunteer Company.

I moved over then to Listowel, where there was a small and spiritless Volunteer Company in existence.

As a result of a stranger coming in, doing some drilling and making some speeches we aroused some additional interest and got additional recruits. Operating from Listowel I succeeded in holding meetings in Duagh and getting a small Company going. In Abbeyfeale the Curate was a Father O'Riordan, who was very enthusiastic, but we found it impossible to get a move on in the town.

It was noticeable at that time in Limerick, and still more in Clare, that the country areas were very much better than the towns. For instance, round Newcastle West we ultimately succeeded in getting three or four good Companies going, but in the town itself we never got more than a nominal Company of about twenty men. In Abbeyfeale we failed to get a Company going, but about two or three miles to the East of it we succeeded in establishing quite a good Company. In the East of County Limerick, with the help of the Crowleys, a very good Company was built up in Ballylanders. It had been there all the time since before the split, but we succeeded in bringing in new members. In Galbally, also, a good Company was formed.

By this time I had been about three months working for the Volunteers in the South, and it was clear to me that as I moved from County to County the atmosphere was steadily improving. I paid a short visit back to some of the Cork areas and found that the greater success I had had lately was not merely a question of County Limerick being better than County Cork but that the temper of the population generally was rising. However, when I proceeded to Clare I found that I was back in a worse

atmosphere than I had experienced in Cork three months earlier. I think Clare must at that time have been the very worst County in the country. I had the names of people in various places who were supposed to be in the I.R.B. or in Sinn Féin. I noticed something about them which I had not noticed anywhere in my travels before, namely, that they always had a poor opinion of each other. When I went into Ennistymon I had three names. I went and saw the three people, and each of them warned me that the other two were no good.

My first town was Ennis. I had been given the name of a shoe-maker whose father had been a Fenian and whose own name, Shinners, I think, Seán McDermott had from I.R.B. records. He and his two brothers worked in the shop. When I arrived in Ennis, of course, the police picked me up and followed me round the town. When I went into this shoe-maker's shop and told them who I was, the sergeant stood directly outside. The brother to whom I spoke was rather cool with me but not unmannerly. However, after about ten minutes his elder brother came and asked me did I think it was fair to bring the police outside the shop in that way. He then asked me to get out. The other brother said he was sorry, and I left. Even a man like Frank Barrett was not willing to be seen with me at that time. I met him in a public-house one night and found he was a Sinn Féiner, but I noticed that he was not willing to be seen in the street with me. Once or twice when he saw me coming in the distance he turned the corner so as not to meet me. The only people who would associate with me in Ennis were a Limerick man

called Tom Brown and two other young lads, neither of whom was a native of Ennis. I, however, persisted in staying in the neighbourhood and riding out to see people in the country whose names had been given to me. I succeeded in starting a Company at Inch and another at Quin, each about four miles from Ennis, but, of course, I could do nothing in Ennis itself. Then an attempt was made to get me out of the town. Rowan, the proprietor of the Queen's Hotel where I was staying, asked me to leave. I said that it was his duty as an inn-keeper to give me accommodation and I refused to go. However, after a week or so I had to move off to the South of the County where I heard there were some organising openings.

When I arrived back in Ennis on a Saturday night, I knew that the Queen's was practically empty but they told me that all the rooms were full and that I could not be taken in. I went across to Carmody's and they apparently knew about me, because they told me that they also were full. I succeeded, however, in getting into a little hotel-restaurant on the main street near the Monument, but when I left it and wished to come back I was refused admittance. I was also refused admittance to the Old Ground Hotel.

A man called Griffin, a Sinn Féiner, who was employed by the Post Office as a telegraph linesman gave me a list of lodging-houses in the town. I went round about eight or ten of them, and all refused to take me. I thought that I was going to be excluded from Ennis, but a man called Kearney, who owned a small public-house

diagonally opposite the court-house, told me that he was a Sinn Féiner and that he would take me in. That was very courageous of him, as the R.I.C. could give endless trouble to any publican. Thanks to Mr. Kearney, who was a relative of Con Kearney, rate collector, I had then acquired a foothold in Ennis and was able to come back when I liked and use the town as a headquarters.

Ennis was not the only place where I experienced difficulty in getting accommodation. Two factors operated to cause people like me to be refused admission. One was that feeling against the Sinn Féiners and pro-Germans, as they were called, was fairly bitter amongst certain sections of people, and the other was that the continual presence of a policeman outside a hotel was thought by proprietors to be likely to frighten other customers away.

In Newcastle West I stayed first in the Devonshire Arms owned by a Mr. Curtin, and for a time had no trouble. Then one day in the commercial room, where all guests had their meals, I was asked by a commercial traveller called O'Looney if I were a commercial. I said I was not. He then said that this was the commercial room as I could see by the notice on the door and that he would be obliged if I would go out. I said that I would not. He then rang for the waiter and asked for the proprietor to come. Finally Miss Curtin arrived, and told me that as I was not a commercial traveller I was not strictly entitled to be in that room and she would be obliged if I would go to the coffee room. I had no option but to comply. After that, for the few days that I stayed in

the hotel, I had my meals in lonely state in the coffee room. I was obliged at the end of the few days to move somewhere else and the next time I came back I was met with the statement that all rooms were full and that I could not be accommodated. I was able, however, to get into a very small ramshackle hotel in the Square, run by two girls called Sheehy, relatives of David Sheehy, M.P. This hotel was in the last state of dilapidation, and, whatever was wrong with the kitchen, any meals we got had to be cooked on the sitting-room fire. The only other guest, the first time I went there, was a Jewist rag-and-bone merchant. Seán McDermott stayed with me in this hotel when he came to speak at a meeting in Newcastle West on St. Patrick's Day, 1916.

In Rathkeale I was again tackled by a commercial traveller in the commercial room of a hotel. I was ultimately forced to take my tea in a small sitting-room, and was refused a bedroom for the night.

Even where people were Sinn Féiners there was sometimes trouble. In Tralee I used to stay in a boarding-house run by the mother of Eamon Ó Conchubhair, whom I had met many years before in the Gaelic League in Dublin. He was a great G.A.A. man, spoke Irish well, and was a very strong Sinn Féiner, though perhaps his mother shared none of his political interests. In any case, after I had stayed there two or three nights at different times, the old lady, one morning when I was leaving, pointed to the policeman up the street who was watching the door, and told me that she would be glad if I went somewhere else next time I came to Tralee. I met

Eamon himself several times afterwards, and he was quite friendly. I fancy his mother never told him about the dismissal that she gave to me.

I tried to get into another hotel in Tralee, Benner's I think, and was met with the suave statement that they were full up. The refusal, however, did not matter to me as I was moving on.

The difficulty about hotels practically all arose, I think, from the way in which I was being followed by police. Even when commercial travellers took the initiative I believe it was either because the police spoke to them, or because they noticed the police hanging about and enquired the reason. From the time I went South at the beginning of 1915 right on until the Rising I was very constantly shadowed and followed by police. The policemen apparently stayed day and night outside any hotel or lodging-house in which I was putting up. If I walked through the town they followed me at twenty or thirty yards distance, sometimes two. When I went out on my bicycle two policemen generally followed me. This in country districts did absolutely no harm, in fact it was a really good advertisement. It got me talked about, and had, in a small way, much the effect that a brass band would have had. It also assured everybody who had any Sinn Féin leanings at all that I was on the right side and had the right gospel. Except very occasionally, I made no attempt to shake off the police, that is to say, I did not go into a house by the front door and slip out by the back. Also, when travelling by train I seldom

or never got off at a station short of the station for which I had a ticket. The police did not accompany me on the railways. If I bought a ticket at a particular station, they immediately found out from the booking-clerk where I had got it for. If I happened to have a return half of a ticket in my pocket, they always got a porter to go into the carriage which I had entered, and pretend to check the tickets. There was practically no pretence, however, about this checking, as tickets were asked for in only one compartment in the train. Having ascertained my destination, the police telephoned to it and one or two constables were there to meet me.

On the whole the police were not offensive. On one occasion I had to be very stiff with a sergeant who tried to cycle alongside and talk to me. If I had permitted that to happen, the effect would have been very bad, because the propaganda put out by the Redmondites was that we were really inveigling young men into the Volunteers to make it easier to conscript them. If I had been seen cycling alongside the sergeant it would have seemed to many people as if I were in league with the police, whereas if the sergeant was cycling twenty yards behind me it would be evident that I was hostile to the Government.

On one occasion I set out, on a Sunday morning, to cycle from Kilrush to Corofin in County Clare to address a meeting for Hubert Hunt. I had a road map, which was not a very good one, and apparently I took a wrong turning, because after I had cycled a good many miles I was definitely lost. A couple of times I took

out my map and tried to hit on the right road, but I was still getting nowhere, although I had cycled far enough to have reached Corofin. Dinner-time was past, and the two policemen behind me were getting tired and hungry. Ultimately they cycled up to me and said, "If you will tell us where you are going we will tell you how to get there". I thought the time had been reached for a compromise, so I told them I was bound for Corofin. They put me on the right road, and I arrived just in time for the meeting.

Another time when I was hurrying from Doon in East Limerick to Pallas station, my back tyre suddenly burst when I was about a mile from the station. I did not want to ride on the rim for fear of leaving myself without a bicycle, so I began to run, wheeling the bicycle. It was obvious to the policeman behind me that I would miss the train. He came up alongside me and said in a friendly way, "Are you bound for Limerick?". I said I was, and he said, "If you will promise me not to get off the train before you get to Limerick I'll lend you my bicycle so that you can catch the train. I will put yours in the waiting-room for you to get later". I made the bargain with him and rode on his bicycle to the station. The policeman arrived at the station in time to telegraph to Limerick that I was coming, and I was duly met by an escort at Limerick station.

As I thought that the way in which the police watched me everywhere was really a help, I took it very philosophically. The only time it really annoyed me

was once in Tralee when I was trying to catch a train and was rather late. For some reason, perhaps out of spite, the booking-clerk kept me waiting, and although I ran as fast as possible to the far up platform from which the train was moving off, a porter prevented me getting aboard. As I turned back, crestfallen at having missed my train, the police guffawed loudly. Generally, however, the police were courteous. I suppose many of them were men who afterwards resigned during the Black and Tan period.

I remember it proved impossible to do anything in the town of Ennistymon, but I was able to get a couple of Companies going a mile or two outside the town. One was at a place called Carhooclough, where were was a family of Barringtons, one of whom was in recent years Assistant Secretary in the Department of Industry and Commerce. A girl of another family in the place - MacInerney's - was married to an Englishman called Dudley-Edwards and was the mother of Professor Dudley-Edwards of U.C.D. There were two or three other strongly Sinn Féin families in the area. My procedure was to meet various people from the district in public-houses in Ennistymon and in the little hotel owned by Miss McCormack. After I had been three or four days in the town and had talked individually to a number of men from the Carhooclough neighbourhood, I got on my bicycle one evening and rode out there. Word had been passed around quietly and about one hundred people were waiting at the cross-roads. The police who had followed me were obviously surprised. I addressed the crowd.

I asked those who were willing to join the Volunteers to fall-in, and I proceeded with the usual business of some elementary drill. I heard afterwards from the barracks that the police had thought I was completely failing in the district.

The other Company in the neighbourhood which I succeeded in forming was established in practically the same way, by getting in touch with a few active young men when they were in Ennistymon, talking things over with them, letting them summon a meeting and then coming along.

On the whole I did not succeed in making very good progress in Clare. As already stated I managed to get a couple of Companies established outside Ennis, another couple of Companies outside Ennistymon. In Killadysert I got a few people together, about eight or ten, and got promises from them to work up the area, but did not actually succeed in forming a Company. I formed a Company, a fairly good one, at Carrigaholt, and another, composed mostly of Irish speakers, at Kilbaha, out in the direction of Loop Head. With the assistance of Seán McNamara I got a few men together at Crusheen north of Ennis, close to the Galway border not far from Gort. In Tomgraney and Scariff and round that area I met odd individuals, but could not form any Companies. Clare was, even at that time, June 1915, worse than Cork had been at the beginning of the year, but it was steadily improving, and it was clear to me that after a little while I should be able to get new Companies going, as I had been doing in Limerick.

It was during this period that the big Volunteer parade, which was attended by a considerable body of Volunteers from Dublin, was held in Limerick. I cycled in from Ennis that morning, and as I was not a member of any formation in the city I stood on the sidewalk to watch the parade. It was fairly big, perhaps a thousand men all told, including Companies from Mitchelstown and other Cork areas, from all County Limerick and Limerick city and the Dublin contingent.

There were a few oldish men beside me where I was standing on the side-walk and they were obviously astonished. As the parade went by I heard one of them say about twenty times, with no great satisfaction in his voice, "God! the Sinn Féiners are very strong. God! the Sinn Féiners are very strong".

After the parade the rabble of the city, particularly the "separation women" got into the mood to make trouble, and a large crowd of them gathered near the station to attack the Volunteers as they moved to the train. There was a certain amount of stone-throwing, and blows were struck at Volunteers as they passed by. In a few instances the crowd pressed in and disarmed Volunteers. One Volunteer officer who lost his head ordered his men to load their rifles. Fortunately his instructions were countermanded, otherwise in the heat of the turmoil, irreparable damage might have been done. I was in civilian clothes in the middle of the crowd and saw the whole proceedings very well. A priest, an Augustinian Father, mounted a car and

harangued the crowd about what they were doing. Summarily, from the car, he expelled various people from the Confraternity. Pearse was very much put out by the disturbance as we heard of its beginning in Daly's house in Barrington St., but later he looked perfectly calm as he marched ahead in his place. Ultimately all the Volunteers got into the station, and one could say that no damage was done. Some of them had been struck by sticks and stones, and some of them gave belts back to the crowd. One young fellow used his bayonet on an assailant, but fortunately did not do much damage. Beyond the loss of two or three rifles, the Volunteers suffered nothing. The occurrence afforded an indication, however, of the hostility that it was still possible to stir up against the Volunteers, the sort of hostility that was seen again when Volunteer prisoners were marched through Dublin after the Rising.

After the Limerick parade I went back to Clare and continued moving round the County, gradually getting in touch with new people, and observing the change which was coming over public opinion.

On, I think, 11th July, 1915, I was in Miss McCormack's hotel in Ennistymon, where my room-mate was Eamon Waldron, then the local múinteóir táistil. At about half-past eight in the morning the door of the room opened and in came a District Inspector, a Sergeant and a couple of constables. The District Inspector came to the side of my bed and proceeded to read out an order under the Defence of the Realm Act

signed by Major General Friend, ordering me to leave the "following area, namely Ireland", within about a fortnight. I rose and looked up the trains for Dublin. I sent off a wire to Volunteer Headquarters saying I had got the order and that I was coming to town. I got an early train to Limerick, spoke to the Dalys in Barrington Street and came on to Dublin.

Immediately I arrived I went to the Volunteer Headquarters and told them that I had made up my mind not to obey the order, and to wait, without in any way hiding myself, until I should be arrested. I then went round to the offices of "Scissors and Paste" or whatever the paper of the time was called, in D'Olier St. There I met Seán McDermott and Arthur Griffith, both of whom agreed entirely with what I had decided on. However, Griffith suggested that it would be a good thing, from the propagandist point of view, if I could be arrested in the house of a Parish Priest. I told him that I did not know any Parish Priest whom I could ask to take me in, that up till then all the help I had got in organising the Volunteers had been from Curates, and that, so far, no Parish Priest had shown any sympathy. Griffith said to me that he thought Father Ó Ciarán of Rockcorry, County Monaghan, would be delighted to have me, and that he himself would write to him that night.

I then went to see Tom Clarke and he told me - the news having reached Dublin by this time - that similar orders had been served on Liam Mellows, Denis McCullough and Herbert Moore Pim.

It was then decided I should go to Belfast where some sort of public meeting would be held. We held a meeting on the Falls Road the night before the expiry of the period specified in the order. McCullough, Pim and I spoke, as well as some others. We denounced the Government and all its works and pomps, and announced that we had no intention whatever of obeying this tyrannical and outrageous order. There was a big crowd naturally, and there was a great deal of cheering at our speeches.

The following morning I set off for Rockcorry, Griffith having already had word conveyed to me that Father Ó Ciaran would be glad to see me. I arrived in Rockcorry fairly early in the day and went out for a bicycle ride with Father Ó Ciaran in the afternoon. Next day I stayed in the house, expecting that the police would arrive at any moment, but apparently they had in some way lost track of me for several days passed and there was no sign of the police.

It was very irksome to keep to the house, but as I had come that distance to be arrested in the house of a Parish Priest I thought it would be foolish to go out and risk being arrested merely on a County Monaghan public highway. Consequently I stuck it out for the best part of a week, sending postcards to various people to say where I was. Ultimately the police arrived early one morning. They were very apologetic, and the priest made the proper protest, from the propaganda point of view, about the invasion of the Parochial House. I was allowed to take my breakfast, and was then conveyed to the local barracks.

Apparently no definite instruction had been given about what was to be done with me, because the sergeant was out a number of times telegraphing. Finally he told me that I was to be taken to Belfast, but that it would be some time before he would be able to get a motor car. By this time it was about two o'clock and the sergeant's wife sent me in a dinner. The police in the barracks were all very civil, but rather curious.

Finally, fairly late in the evening, the motor car arrived and, accompanied by the sergeant and two policemen, I set off on my first motor drive for Belfast jail. I arrived there, I think, at about eight or nine o'clock in the evening, and was put in one of the semi-underground cells which were used for prisoners reaching the jail too late at night to go through the ordinary reception procedure. Jails were very new things to me at the time, and I remember thinking when I was locked up in the cell how easy it would be to forget a prisoner and leave him there until he starved. Next morning, however, the door duly opened and I was taken to the Reception, where the usual procedure of the prisoner having a bath and his clothes being searched while he was actually in the bath was gone through. I noticed then a disposition on the part of the warders to give good advice and to say that it was very foolish for a young man to start on that sort of career, etc., etc. As the men were quite friendly I took all the advice in good part and entered into no arguments with them. After the reception I was sent upstairs, wearing, of course, my own clothes.

When exercise time came in the afternoon I saw McCullough and Pim, who had been arrested several days before me, and found that the warders made no difficulty about letting us get near enough together to talk, although later on, after a visit by the Governor, they put other prisoners between us when we were walking in the exercise ring. McCullough and Pim were both tried before me; one sentenced to three months and the other to four months imprisonment.

After a few days I also was sent down to the police court. The Volunteers had engaged Charlie Power for the defence, and he did his stuff quite well, cross-examining Major Price who was the Government witness and who testified to the fact that the banishment order had been signed by Major General Friend. Power cross-questioned Price as much as possible, he asked why such orders were made, and generally put up the sort of show that would make the most from the propaganda point of view out of the orders served on us and out of the terms of imprisonment which we were to serve for not obeying them.

After being sentenced I was removed to a different wing of the prison, C.2, and was on the same floor as McCullough and Pim. Our cells were as widely separated as possible, and on Sundays when we exercised in the ring four or five convicts were always kept between each pair of us. When we did our exercise in the wood-yard on week-days we were never allowed to work the cross-cut together, or to sit close to one another. However, the warder was certainly not strict with us, and we could

pass up and down with bits of timber and find opportunities to speak to each other for a few minutes each day. One warder occasionally passed newspapers in to us, as well as copies of "The Irish Volunteer".

I found it rather boring to pass twenty-two hours a day locked up in my cell, consequently I worked very hard at mat making and became both quick and expert at it. One of the jobs given me was to make some special high-pile floor mats for the hall of a Belfast doctor.

As I was not given hard labour I had a mattress from the beginning, so that, although it was a bit hard, I had little difficulty in sleeping. We were all given a pint of milk per diem extra on the unsolicited order of the doctor, and the health of the three of us was very good during the three months we were incarcerated.

Conscription became rather an issue for the first time while we were in prison, and we got plenty of evidence that the country was changing rapidly. In one of the papers smuggled in to us there was a poem by Herbert Moore Pim, supposed to have been smuggled out of the prison, which began: -

"I tread the ground that felons tread,
I live within a house of thieves,
High is my window,
Hard my bed,
But whoso" loves thee never grieves".

When we asked Pim how he had got it out, he disclosed that he had written it before he was arrested and had left it with his secretary to publish at the right moment.

During the first month no library books were provided for prisoners, instead, once a week, the librarian handed in what was called a book of instruction, which might be an ordinary reader for the 2nd class in a National School, or an elementary geography or something of that sort. One could read it in five or six minutes. Beyond that I had only a Bible, of which I read a lot that I had not read before, and a bound volume of a magazine called "The Quiver". "The Quiver" had, as one of its monthly features, a page of cookery recipes, and as the prison food was decidedly plain I read these recipes over and over with great pleasure and interest.

The usual remittance was given for good conduct and I was released in very little more than two months after being sentenced. I was met at the jail gates by quite a number of people, many of whom I had never seen before, and I was commandeered to address a meeting in St. Mary's Hall shortly afterwards.

I went to my father's house, about twelve miles outside Belfast, for a couple of days, and then I went to Dublin. Somebody gave me a thousand .303 cartridges to bring with me, and I remember they made my bag very heavy to carry.

After a visit to Volunteer Headquarters I set off for the South to resume work. By this time Terry MacSwiney, who had resigned his post as technical teacher when Mellows, McCullough, Pim and I were arrested, was now in charge of County Cork and County Kerry.

However, I arranged to meet him in Tralee, and to take a short trip to see the Companies with which I was originally associated around Dingle and to the West of it. Thereafter I confined myself to Clare, Limerick and part of Tipperary. I helped Pierce McCann to organise one or two Volunteer Companies in Cashel neighbourhood, in addition to the fairly good Company which he had around his own place. I also visited Clonmel, where there was a pretty good Company, and worked over certain areas with Seamus O'Neill, now Garda Superintendent in Galway. I met Eamon O'Dwyer, who was very active at the time, and helped him, and in Tipperary had my first meeting with Seán Treacy and somewhere round Emly I met Dan Breen. On the whole, however, I gave much less time to Tipperary than to Limerick and Clare.

During the three or four months I was away the apparently rather immediate threat of conscription made it as easy to form Volunteer Companies as it had previously been difficult. I remember, however, making rather a bloomer in this connection. I was drilling a Company one night at a place called Tournafulla which is near or over the Kerry border. In the course of my remarks I talked about the necessity of fighting with whatever weapons were available if an attempt were made to apply conscription, and said it was better to die fighting for our freedom and for Ireland than to be led out like dogs on a chain to die for England on the Continent. My remarks seemed to be well enough taken, but when the parade was dismissed three or four fellows

came up to me and said, "We would like you to know that it isn't fear of conscription that has us in the Volunteers". Actually that was so. The conscription issue made people think, and the flocking into the Volunteers was due to rising National spirit and not to any wish to organise for personal safety.

I went over, I think, every part of County Limerick between my return about November and the middle of March, 1916, and while one could not say that a Volunteer Company was formed in every parish it was clear that it would not be long until that was the position.

Among the most active helpers I had during all this time were the Scanlons of Galbally and the Crowleys of Ballylanders which was close beside. In Limerick city the help and influence of the Daly family was of the greatest importance. Old John Daly was failing very much at the time; he was not able to talk with real ease, but his prestige was enormous. His nieces were very active and the hospitality of the family was without stint. Every stranger connected with the Volunteers was invited to stay with them, and during this period whenever I had to pass a night in Limerick passing from the East of the County to the West, or vice versa, or passing from Limerick into Clare, I stayed with the Dalys in Barrington St.

The Limerick Battalion became very efficient and active about this time, and the Sunday route marches and manoeuvres had a great effect within a radius of several miles from the city.

In connection with activities in Limerick an incident recalls itself which occurred just before the visit of the Dublin Volunteers to the city in May. The Cumann na mBan in Limerick had arranged a lecture and had brought Mary MacSwiney to speak. This was the first time that I had ever encountered the lady, although I had known Terry MacSwiney fairly well for a good while. At the time there were stories going around that some day the British forces were going to surround the Volunteers, while they were out on a route march, and disarm them. Mary MacSwiney, who had no business to deal with such matters, proceeded in her speech to urge the Volunteers not to fight but to give up their arms peacefully if surrounded, as while arms could be replaced lives could not be replaced. There was great indignation against her, and rightly so, at the time.

I inclined during this period to spend more time in Limerick than in Clare because it was much easier to get visible results from work in Limerick. Nevertheless Clare had improved a good deal, and we got Companies going in a number of new areas and the older Companies strengthened. To the very last, however, I found it impossible to do anything at all in the town of Ennis.

Money was always very tight with me at the time. The principle on which Volunteer organisers were paid was that we sent in our hotel bills and list of rail fares, which were met by the Executive; and in addition we were given fifteen shillings a week. It was very hard, in view of extra expenses such as occasional meals

and treats for other people, to carry on with fifteen shillings a week. I had been for some time trying to save up enough money to buy a Volunteer uniform, but never had managed it. However, at Christmas 1915 the local staff in Limerick city presented me with a Volunteer uniform, which I wore on all special occasions afterwards. In Limerick Australian hats were the uniform headgear.

When St. Patrick's Day was approaching it was decided to hold a big parade in Newcastle West, and as there were a good number of Companies around there we thought the occasion justified bringing somebody from Dublin. Seán McDermott agreed to come. In the town, as I think I have already indicated, there was practically no Volunteer Company, but the people had come over tremendously to Sinn Féin and we knew that the meeting would be enthusiastic. Seán came down to Limerick the night before and arrived in Newcastle West on the morning of St. Patrick's Day. The Square was packed with Volunteers and sympathisers and no opposition was shown, though we were told that the couple of dog-fights which broke out in the crowd were purposely started.

As I was still forbidden Curtin's hotel, Seán McDermott and I stayed that night in the little shack run by the Sheehy girls.

Seán McDermott told me that a Rising was coming very soon. He then proceeded, for what reason I do not know, to tell me that it was intended to land not only arms but men from submarines. The result of his

saying that was that I did not believe a word of what he told me. I thought, in fact, that he was just giving the usual pep talk that we had got before, for the purpose of making everybody feel that something big would happen soon and that we should all be on our toes.

Seán McDermott was leaving on the morning of the 18th, and I had made arrangements with the Colberts of Athea to help with the strengthening of the Company which they were forming there. I saw Seán McDermott off on the train for Limerick and took my bicycle to Athea. As usual I was followed by a policeman, but I noticed that when I came near Athea he dropped back and apparently returned to Newcastle West. It struck me as strange that he was not following me to the end, but I attached no significance to it.

I saw the Colberts and some local men that evening, and went late to the little hotel in Athea. After I had been sleeping for some time I was aroused by people knocking on the door of the hotel, and I heard them being answered from the window. I thought some late travellers had arrived and was falling asleep again when a District Inspector and four or five R.I.C. men rushed into the room. The District Inspector told me he was arresting me. A funny thing happened then. I had a very small .22 automatic pistol. It was in the hip pocket of my trousers lying on the chair. I happened also to have about £2 in silver in another trousers pocket. The District Inspector having searched first under my pillow, lifted up my trousers, felt the silver in the pocket and took it out. He

searched the other side pocket of the trousers, and because they were so much lighter with the £2 in silver taken out, he handed them to me to put on, with the pistol still in the hip pocket. I thought he had got the pistol until I actually had the trousers on the felt it touching me.

I did now know what had happened. I thought that perhaps the general round-up and disarming of Volunteers, which had been so much talked about, had begun.

There were about ten or twelve police around the hotel when I was taken out. I was driven to Ardagh railway station and then taken by train to Limerick. I was taken off the train at Limerick and brought to William Street barracks. I saw then that nothing in the way of general action could have taken place because people were going quietly about their business, and no signs of excitement were apparent.

After I had been given a meal in the barracks I was taken up to the station for the Dublin train. Later on I got a chance of dropping my pistol out of the train near Emly, where I knew there was a Volunteer Company. Dan Breen told me afterwards that it was found on the railway track and handed over to him.

When I reached Arbour Hill prison I was taken into the Sergeant Major"s office to be enrolled as an inmate and to be searched. To my astonishment, when I was led in Liam Mellows was just on the point of being led out. I had no chance, of course, of any

conversation with Mellows. We were never exercised in the same yard, and I never saw him again in the prison.

I was given a paper which recalled the order to leave the "following area, namely, Ireland", which had been served on me in the previous July, and two or three places in England were mentioned as places to one of which I would be deported and of which I could make my choice. Following the line previously taken, I refused to make any choice. Seámus O'Connor, solicitor, came in to see me after a day or two. Apparently he was not thoroughly trusted by Seán McDermott and the others, because he said nothing to me about a Rising being in the offing. Also he did not tell me specifically that I ought to make a choice of the town in England to which I should be sent, he only asked me had I done so and made no comment when I said I had not, that I would give them no satisfaction.

Ultimately, after a week or ten days, I was taken to the boat at Dun Laoghaire. For some reason the boat did not sail that morning, and I remained aboard all day in charge of a group of military police. The boat crossed to Holyhead at night and the police marched me off. When they let go their hold on me and the gangway was free I turned to go aboard the ship again, but was hailed back on shore a second time by the police. They then kept me close to them and took me into the train. In the train they handed me a ticket for Abingdon, Berkshire, a town near Oxford, and a paper commanding me to stay

there and to report my arrival to the police.

Some time after the train started I fell asleep. When I woke up the military policemen were not in the carriage. A few minutes afterwards, the train stopped at a station at which another train was also stopped at the opposite side of the platform. I lifted the small case I had with me, got out of the train and got into the opposite train. Some time about seven o"clock in the morning I found myself in Manchester. I then had to consider what I should do. I had practically no money in my possession, and even if I got to London I did not know the name or address of a single person in the city, nor indeed in any other town in England.

After walking about the streets of Manchester for a time I decided that there was little chance of my doing anything but falling into the hands of the police again, thus giving them an opportunity to take further action against me, and that I had better go to Abingdon. I went to the railway station and found out how I could get to Abingdon from Manchester. It was Sunday and I was only able to go as far as a place called Bletchley that night. I stayed the night in a small hotel there. The railway people asked me about my ticket, but I explained that I had made a mistake and had got into the wrong train, so I was let through.

Next morning I went to Abingdon. I saw two or three policemen at the station, who had either my description or photographs of me, because they nudged

one another and it was obvious that they recognised me.

I went down to the hotel and took a room for that night. Then I went round searching for digs, as I had not enough money to last more than a day or two in a hotel. When I had found the digs I wrote to Dublin saying where I was, asking for some money to be sent me and for an address in London to which I might go.

I walked round for two or three days with the police observing me but otherwise taking little interest in me. Then about the fourth day a sergeant and a constable came to my lodgings while I was having my lunch and asked me to go to the barracks. In the barracks I was told that I was under arrest for my failure to report to the police in compliance with the order which had been served on me when I was being deported. About half an hour later the sergeant told me that a lady had called to see me but that she had not come into the barracks. I heard afterwards that Helena Molony had been sent over with money and to make arrangements for my getting away. That night I was sent to Oxford jail.

After a couple of days Mabel Fitzgerald, Desmond's wife, came to see me in Oxford jail and told me that the instructions from Dublin were that I was to defend myself and get out if possible. Art O'Brien had instructed George Gavan Duffy, who was then practising as a solicitor in England, to appear for me when I should be before the magistrates. That was the first time that I began to give credence to what Seán McDermott had told me on St. Patrick's Day.

I was brought back to Abingdon from Oxford jail and tried before a local bench of five or six lay magistrates. George Gavan Duffy made a case, which I understood as little as did the magistrates on the bench. In it he talked a great deal about Magna Carta, Habeas Corpus, and so on. Apparently the local magistrates were overawed, and decided to take the safest course legally. They convicted me, and decided that as I had already been a week in Oxford jail they would impose no penalty. I was then discharged and George Gavan Duffy told me that Árt Ó Briain would communicate with me the following day, and that I was to stay in Abingdon for the present.

The next day or the day after, Art Ó Briain came down himself and told me that things were definitely moving in Dublin, and that I was not to go to London by train as I might easily be picked up, but that a car would come for me within two or three days. I think that the day on which he saw me was Good Friday. I waited around next day and Sunday and no news came. Monday and Tuesday passed without news. Then on the Wednesday word came that there was a Rising in Dublin. When I went out I found that, for the first time since coming to Abingdon, I was being followed by a policeman. I then realised that events had moved much faster than Art Ó Briain had anticipated when he was talking to me, and that I should have to move myself even though I was still without addresses or acquaintances in England. I decided to wait, however, until the following morning,

study the railway time-tables and make up my mind as to what would be the best move.

The next day I was arrested early and taken to the barracks. Apparently no instructions had reached the police except that they were to arrest me, because I was kept in the drunks' lock-up cell for over a week. It was all right except that the blankets were filthy, some of the drunks having been sick over them, and the place was very confined. The police were civil enough. After the first day I was allowed out to walk in the little courtyard of the barracks, and then I was taken out to play billiards with the police in the barracks billiard-room. There was no sign of hostility about the demeanour of the police, who seemed to know nothing about Ireland, and cared nothing. The only remark I heard about the Rising was when the news first came, my landlady said, "But, of course, the Irish are always up to something".

At the end of ten days or so I was removed from the barracks in Abingdon to Brixton Prison. On my first Sunday there I was put in the front seat of the church. I tried to find out from some of the warders what was happening in Ireland or what had happened, but they would tell me nothing. The police in Abingdon also, although rather sociable, had declined to give any information. I had no idea then, nor for a long time later, whether the Rising was finished or was still going on.

On my second Sunday in Brixton when I was taken to the church I moved to walk up to the front seat to which I had been directed on the previous

Sunday. The chief warder very brusquely, and indeed very angrily, ordered me back and I was put in the very back seat. From there I noticed that curtains had been put round one end of the seat where I had been the previous Sunday. They were not closely drawn, and by moving my position a little I was able to see that they hid a tall man in grey clothes with a beard. He turned his head slightly at one stage and I guessed that he was Casement, although I had not heard of his arrest. Two or three days after that, when I was being taken to the baths, I suddenly ran into Casement coming round a corner with two or three warders. I stepped out and shook hands with him before we were separated. At that time apparently, Casement had not made a move to become a Catholic, otherwise I should not have seen him in the church. On the following Sunday he was not in church, and I gather that he was taken to the Tower about that time.

I got no letters from anybody during all this time. The warders, unlike Irish warders, while civil were absolutely official. They declined to give any information about the outside world, and I was still left, at the end of a month, without the slightest knowledge of what had happened at home. One day out at exercise a convict told me that there had been a big naval battle, and that the Germans had destroyed a British fleet. He was neither disturbed nor elated, but was merely glad to have a piece of interesting news to pass on.

I found the days in the cell with only three-

quarters of an hour solitary exercise outside, extremely boring. The librarian warder, always changing my book when I was out at exercise, gave me books by Mrs. Henry Woods and Mrs. Humphrey Ward, which after a time I found it nearly impossible to read. I left a note on my slate one day saying, "No more books by women, please". 'After that I got boys" adventure stories and detective tales, which were much better. At a certain point I asked the chief warder if he would give me work to do, as was given to sentenced prisoners. The result was that I got mail-bags to sew, and I used to spend three or four hours per day sewing mail bags, as a change from reading.

Then one day the chief warder came to me. He was very cordial and said, "It must be tiresome sitting in the cell. Would you like to go up and sit on a balcony from which you will have a view of the yard?". I said I would, and next day I discovered the cause of all this. I had a visitor - Desmond Fitzgerald"s sister Kate - for the first time, and got the first news for two months after the Rising. She told me that Larry Ginnell had asked a question in the House of Commons about me, and that the Minister answering had denied that I was in solitary confinement and had also denied that I was being refused visitors. After that I got some letters and was seen by a number of London-Irish visitors.

In July I was moved to Reading jail. On the same day about thirty-four or thirty-five reached it

from several other prisons, including some from Frongoch.

Amongst those in Reading were Arthur Griffith, P.T. Daly, who had been an old Fenian organiser, Tomás MacCurtain, Terry MacSwiney, Seamus Robinson, Tom Craven of Liverpool, Frank Burke of Carrickmacross, Darrel Figgis, George Nicholls of Galway, Seán Milroy, Peadar Ó Hannrachan, Alderman Cole of Dublin, MacGowan, McCormack and O'Neill - Citizen Army men of Dublin, William O'Brien, Denis McCullough, Pierce McCann, Herbert Moore Pim, Micheal Brennan, Eamon O'Dwyer and Liam Langley and Alf Cotton. A little later we had Joe Robinson. Dr. Dundon was there for a short time. Henry Dixon, Seán T. O'Kelly and "Ginger" O'Connell were also in the group.

Immediately I was brought to Reading Herbert Moore Pim came to me and asked me to swear Darrel Figgis into the I.R.B. I refused, saying that I had no authority. Very soon afterwards, like most of the prisoners there, I came to the conclusion that Figgis was no good. Arthur Griffith, however, curiously enough had a sort of admiration for Figgis because of the way in which, when the first group arrived, he had given lip to the Governor and to some warders.

As soon as we had settled down in the jail it was decided to elect a Captain, and Herbert Moore Pim proposed Darrel Figgis who was elected because the different groups had had no time to get acquainted properly and talk things over. After a time the prisoners became very dissatisfied with Figgis, who

made a habit of walking up and down the exercise yard with the Governor when he came on a round of inspection, and who also tried to make a "big fellow" of himself by agreeing on behalf of the prisoners to any suggestion made by the Governor. Ultimately it was decided to get Figgis out of office, by proposing that the office of Captain should go round and that a new election should take place every month. It was decided that I should follow Figgis lest he should allege that he was put out of office because he was a Protestant. Several people held office in succession after that, and Seán T. O'Kelly was in office at the time we were released just before Christmas 1916.

Arthur Griffith was the principal figure amongst the prisoners, and was highly popular with all. He very soon started a weekly, manuscript journal, which, on the suggestion of Terence MacSwiney, was christened "The Outpost", "An Foraire". Nearly everybody in the prison contributed to it from time to time. Terence MacSwiney wrote every week. Peadar Ó Hannrachâin wrote an Irish contribution every week, and read what he had written, as Griffith had not enough Irish to do so. Under the influence of Peadar Ó Hannrachâin I began to write in Irish for the first time and sent in one or two short articles. Griffith himself wrote every sort of thing in the journal. He wrote a very simple, very interesting series of articles about South Africa. He wrote mock heroic ballads. He also wrote from time to time detective stories which dealt with prison events and figured a detective named Vidock Brennan, who was identifiable with Michael Brennan.

Appendix 6

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

Form to be completed and inserted in the original record

in place of each part abstracted

(i) **Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed:** WS 737/A

(ii) **How many documents have been abstracted:** 1p.

(iii) **The date of each such document:** 12/4/54

(iv) **The description of each document:**

WS 737 Witness Statement Ernest Blythe p 17

Name of individual

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) **Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:**

(c) **Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.**

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

Besides conducting the magazine, Griffith ran all sorts of sports and entertainments. He had pretended magical gifts, and professed to be able to find any article, however carefully hidden. He did this by the simple device of having an agent amongst those who were hiding the articles which had to be found. He presided over the handball tournaments, refereeing, marking, and carrying out draws which determined who was to play with who. On the whole he behaved throughout our period in Reading like a man having a carefree holiday aboard a ship.

Griffith had an extraordinary knowledge of Irish music. No matter what tune was mentioned in any discussion he was able to whistle it. He must have had at least hundreds of tunes in his mind.

Seán T. O'Kelly's principal activity was to conduct a choir. I do not know much about it, as, after hearing me sing once, he expelled me.

was the crank of the prison. He fought with nearly everybody. Personally I had no quarrel with him, but I managed that only by taking great care to avoid him once I had discovered how difficult he was.

Henry Dixon was much older than any of the other prisoners except Joseph MacBride, brother of Major MacBride. Unfortunately a certain group of prisoners plagued Henry Dixon a good deal. We had our meals in the hall and found places for all by putting three trestle tables end to end. Henry Dixon

sat at the middle table. The others who sat at that section of the table formed themselves (led mostly by Ginger O'Connell) into what they called the Centre Party and elected Henry as Chairman. All matters to be decided by the prisoners were discussed after breakfast while we sat round the table. The so-called Centre Party made a rule that every member must speak in the name of the Chairman, but that the Chairman himself must not speak. Consequently when anything was under discussion on which Mr. Dixon had a view and got up to express it they silenced him by banging their plates and their spoons. Then the others would rise in their turns and express the most contrary opinions, each speaking always "in the name of the Chairman of the Centre Party".

About that time the British Royal Commission on Divorce issued its report. Henry Dixon, being a student of social affairs, got a copy of the Blue Book sent in to him. The Centre Party formed a vigilance committee, searched his room, seized the Blue Book and returned it to him after they had spent several hours blacking out what they described as the "indecent passages". In other ways they gave Henry Dixon a great deal of annoyance. If he was ever late for a meal and they saw him emerging from his cell at the top of the stairs, they all rose to their feet and remained standing until he was seated. However, he took all this in good part, and, although a little annoyed, did not suffer from it as much as a more touchy man would have done.

Ginger O"Connell conducted military classes of various sorts right through our period of imprisonment. A blackboard was obtained on which he drew the maps necessary to explain the course of a great number of battles and campaigns. Two or three Irish classes were also conducted.

We could buy food from the canteen in another part of the prison, which we were allowed to visit twice a week. As most of us had a few pounds when arrested and as we were paid about a pound a week in the name of two or three prisoners who were supposed to be orderlies for keeping the place clean - all prisoners taking their turn at the actual work - we were always able to get extra sugar and butter, and also materials for the so-called birthday parties which we had every Sunday night. At these "birthday parties" there was generally ham, bread, butter, coffee and a few drinks for those who took drink. Everybody who had money took his turn to give a "birthday party".

There was a great deal of political discussion and a great deal of planning about what we should do in the way of a political organisation when we got out of prison. Those who took the most prominent part in these discussions were Arthur Griffith, Seán Milroy and Terence MacSwiney.

All the men in the prison grew beards except Terence MacSwiney. He shaved regularly, and after a time we found out that he was being visited frequently by the Miss Murphy whom he afterwards married.

Terence was very reticent, and it was a long time before anyone heard who was visiting him.

Ultimately rumours of a general release began to spread, and we heard of large numbers being released from Frongoch. Finally on 22nd or 23rd December, the Governor came down and told us that our release had been ordered and that we could get out in about an hour. He then sent for me, and when I went to his office he informed me that the order issued in July 1915 directing me to leave Ireland was still in force. That was the order under which I was deported a fortnight before Easter 1916. The Governor told me that because of its still being in force I could go where I liked in Britain on being released from the prison but that I was not to return to Ireland. He asked me where I wanted to go and I said London. Others got tickets for Dublin, but I was given a ticket only to London. However, I came ahead with the rest and had money to pay for a ticket home. On board the boat we had only steerage tickets. The night, however, was rough and a lot of us wanted bunks, so we invaded the saloon part of the ship, in spite of the attempts of the sailors to prevent us, and took possession of the bunks. Apparently the Captain must have decided that it was easier to leave us where we were than to interfere further with us. During the night I heard two stewardesses talking, one saying to the other, "There is a terrible rough crowd aboard to-night".

Arriving in Dublin I half expected that I should be arrested when I landed but I was not, either the police had no instructions or I was not recognised. Seán T. O'Kelly asked me to come home to his own house for breakfast, which I did. Afterwards I went to Bray to see Mrs. Desmond Fitzgerald. Desmond was serving penal servitude. Then I left to go up North. As I had not slept very well the night before, I fell asleep in the train and woke up suddenly thinking I was at Lisburn. I snatched my bag and jumped out. The train moved off instantly and was gone before I had time to realise that I was not at Lisburn but at Lurgan. I took an outside car and drove to my father's house, which was eight or nine miles off. I remained there for about a week, the police having apparently lost sight of me.

At the end of the week I went in to Belfast to see if I could find Seán Lester (afterwards Secretary General of the League of Nations). I saw myself being spotted as I passed through Lisburn, but was not interfered with until I reached Belfast. I was then picked up, taken to the police station, and, after an hour or two, put aboard a train for Dublin where I was conveyed to Arbour Hill.

I was kept in Arbour Hill for about a week, I think. Then I was brought before the Officer Commanding the British forces in Dublin. He had a map before him with a small triangle marked on it in red ink. He told me that the old order expelling me from Ireland was in force, but that they were going

to give me a choice; I could either give an undertaking to reside within the triangle which he indicated (it was a very small area round my father's farm in County Antrim) or, alternatively, they would take me to Liverpool and put me aboard ship for New York. I was quite anxious to go to America, especially under those circumstances, but I had actually seen nobody in touch with affairs since I got home. In Belfast I had not even had the opportunity of seeing Seán Lester, and, of course, my own people knew nothing about how matters stood. I had no idea of what had happened to the Volunteer organisation, of what was being done or of what was being planned, and I decided that, in the circumstances, I should stay in Ireland. Accordingly, I signed the undertaking put before me by the British Commander.

I was released in time to get a train for the North, and I spent about six months there. A few people came out from time to time from Belfast to see me, and I went from time to time to the two or three Catholic and Nationalist houses in the neighbourhood, but I found the stay rather tiresome. I had never read much Irish up till then, and I spent most of the few pounds I possessed in getting practically all the Irish books in print. I read them all, and I began definitely to write in Irish during that six months. Once I got going I sent an article every week to the "Claidheamh Soluis", and, to my astonishment, after some time they sent me a cheque, which was welcome as my funds were getting very low indeed.

When all the penal servitude prisoners were released and the East Clare election campaign began, I decided to stay put no longer. I wrote a letter to the British Commander in Dublin withdrawing my undertaking to remain in the limited area and sent it off by registered post.

At the end of a week I made for Dublin, but, lest I should be arrested at Lisburn or Lurgan or any of the stations close at hand, I cycled to Scarva, going through Hillsboro and Banbridge, and took the train at Scarva.

When I reached Dublin I stayed with the Figzgeralds for about a week. After three or four days a D.M.P. man came in one morning and told me that the order to leave Ireland had been suspended and that for the present I could go where I liked.

The Dalys of Limerick had written asking me to spend a while with them. I accepted the invitation and arrived in Limerick just after the end of the Clare election campaign. I found there that there was a great deal of strained feeling between the officers of the Volunteers, as there was prior to the Rising, and a great many people who found fault with their attitude and action at that time. I thought there was no use in discussing the past, but I agreed that the complete inactivity of the existing body of Volunteer officers was wrong. No appeals to them were of any use at that point. Although as a result of the release of the penal servitude prisoners and of the Clare election a great deal of activity was beginning all over the country, the

Limerick officers did not move.

Peadar MacMahon was in Limerick at the time, having lost the job he had before the Rising, when he fought in the College of Surgeons. He was employed at accountancy in Daly"s bakery. A couple of other Dublin Volunteers were also employed by the Dalys, one of them a very good man called Peadar Dunne, being a bread-server. Jim Doyle was the name of the other.

After a lot of talk with Peadar MacMahon, Peadar Dunne and three or four Limerick people, including Johnny Sweeney and Martin Barry, we decided that it would be impossible to stir those in charge of the existing Volunteer body in Limerick to action. We then agreed that the only thing to do was to organise a second Battalion, and we set about doing it. In various places we called meetings. We called one, for example, under some pretext in the existing Volunteer rooms, and got a crowd of young men who were not in the Volunteers and were not being encouraged to join. I spoke to them at length, and so did some of the others, and they agreed to form a Company. We then fixed a place outside the city where they could drill, and Peadar MacMahon arranged for a drill instructor for them. More men were got in, and ultimately elections of officers were held. A little later, on the outskirts of the city on the road towards Nenagh at a place called, I think, the Pike, I held another meeting and got a second Company established. A third meeting was held in a

quarry on the outskirts of the city, not far from the railway station, and a third Company was established. I remember that in each case it proved very difficult to fix on a suitable drill night, especially was it so in the third Company, which we formed in the quarry. Between Sodalities and Confraternities there was not so much as one night in the week in which everyone was free. I do not suppose there is any city in Ireland which has so many religious societies as Limerick has.

Ultimately we formed four Companies on the same ground as the existing Volunteer Battalion. These Companies after a time were properly organised, and finally a Battalion organisation was created. Before we had got quite so far, however, Thomas Ashe died, and on the day of his funeral a Volunteer parade was held. The old 1st Battalion headed the parade, and we followed up with our 2nd Battalion, which was rather bigger. As proper staffs had not been appointed at this time, I took charge of the 2nd Battalion and marched at its head. However, the difficulties of carrying on were still so great that the local men felt that the help of a stranger was absolutely necessary, and that if I were arrested at that stage the 2nd Battalion would fall to pieces. Consequently three of them came up and marched in line with me so that I should not appear to be more than a person marching in the ranks. Nothing I could say would induce them to leave me by myself.

A good deal of feeling existed amongst the officers of the 1st Battalion because of the formation of a parallel organisation in the same place, and to an extent the feeling was reciprocated. It was a long time before there was the right feeling and proper discipline in Limerick after that.

I am not sure if we did right in creating the new organisation; perhaps if we had continued to urge the existing officers to undertake some activity, our appeals, plus the changing temperature of the country, would have sufficed to induce them to make the moves that would bring them recruits and strengthen the movement.

During this time I had, of course, no employment, and, although I neither smoked nor drank, the very small amount of money that I had was ebbing away. I asked two or three people to let me know if they heard of any job which I could get. Suddenly a letter arrived from the Gaelic League asking me to go as organiser to West Cork and to cover again the ground which Dick Mulcahy had covered as a Gaelic League organiser shortly after the Rising. I did not feel that I could refuse to accept the offer, and I also felt that I had done all I could in Limerick. Some of the Volunteers, however, thought that the Gaelic League's offer had been engineered by Seán Ó Murthuile at the instance of the First Battalion in order to get me out of Limerick. Seán, peculiarly enough, was not fully trusted by either of the two Volunteer organisations which were then operating in Limerick.

I went, as instructed by the Gaelic League, to Bantry and made my headquarters there for the three or four months that I continued in the employment of the Gaelic League. I religiously visited all the schools in the area, spoke to the teachers and occasionally to the children and suggested additional activities to them. I did not find, however, that I could do much in the way of forming Gaelic League Branches. The people who wanted activity wanted Volunteer Companies and Companies of Cumann na mBan. Consequently, though I was paid by the Gaelic League, I devoted most of my time to the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan, at any rate in the evenings. I started a great number of small and large Volunteer units and I succeeded in strengthening a number of those already in existence. In Castletownbere, where they had a hall, the visit of a stranger enabled the small unit already there to increase its numbers. I also was able to get a unit going in Eyeries, where the principal local man was Seán O'Driscoll, whom I afterwards met in Belfast gaol, and who later on was in the Civic Guards.

I went by boat from Bantry to Castletownbere. When I landed I went straight to the hotel before enquiring for the local people whose names I had. I had just finished my tea when I was told that the District Inspector wanted to see me. I went out, wondering if there was another arrest coming, but found that the District Inspector was a man called Murnane whom I had known in the Dramatic Society in Newtownards before he joined the R.I.C. as a Cadet.

His call was quite friendly, and he told me, what I now learned for the first time, that in the list of suspected people issued to the police on the outbreak of war in 1914 my name was the first, the reason being, of course, that it was in the Antrim County section and that it began with a "B". I cut short the interview as soon as I could without insulting the man. I did not feel that it would be any help to me locally to have it reported over Castletownbere that on my arrival I had spent a long time closeted with the District Inspector.

I went back by road from Castletownbere and made some arrangements with Murt O'Shea in Adrigole to get a Company going there, and also with his brother Seán O'Shea in Derrycarn. I found a number of people in Glengarriff also anxious to help. In various other areas, like Kealkil, it proved easy to get Volunteer units going.

Bantry itself had already a fairly strong Volunteer Company and a great number of Cumann na mBan. At that time Volunteer training consisted, apart from forming fours and the like, in route marches, and one of the things that plagued the Volunteers in Bantry most was that the Cumann na mBan insisted on trailing after them whenever they went on a route march, a proceeding which subjected them to a certain amount of derision from the rural population. I remember conspiring with the local Captain of the Volunteers in several schemes to outwit the Cumann na mBan and leave them behind.

After I had been fairly well over the Bantry area and had started one or two Irish classes and a dramatic society, which arranged to do a play in Irish, and a larger number of Volunteer units, the local Sinn Féin organisation in West Cork purchased "The Southern Star". Seán Buckley and Peadar Ó Hannrachâin were two of the Directors, so, I think, was Barney O'Driscoll, and some others whose names I do not remember. I was asked to go to the paper as editor and I accepted the offer.

I should say that when I was going from Cork to Bantry on my first trip I travelled West in the train with Michael Collins and Diarmuid O'Hegarty, who were going to speak at an Aeridheacht in Bantry. I had met Collins for a few minutes in the National Aid office when released from Reading or released from Arbour Hill after giving my undertaking to go North, but could not say that I knew him until the day we travelled West from Cork. The first time I ever heard Collins deliver a public speech was at that Aeridheacht. He spoke very vigorously, but the time had not yet come when he could grip the crowd. Although his reputation was growing, it was by no means made, and he did not reckon as any more important than an ordinary local speaker. Gearóid O'Sullivan, whom I had not met previously, was also in the party, but I do not remember that he spoke at the Aeridheacht.

A week or so before leaving Bantry for Skibbereen where "The Southern Star" was published,

I thought I would attend the local Protestant Church on Sunday morning, for the purpose of scandalizing the local Loyalists. I had not been in a church in Ireland since before the Rising and had not realised that the practice of playing "God save the King" at the end of the Service had been adopted. Accordingly, at the end of the service I rose to leave but noticed that the other people who stood up remained standing, and then in a second or two I realised that "God save the King" was being played. I promptly sat down on my seat. The local District Inspector was in uniform a few feet away from me, and I saw others scowling at me. In consequence either of that or of the fact that it had been reported that I was drilling Volunteers more than organising Gaelic League Branches, I had an official visit from the District Inspector, accompanied by a Sergeant and two or three policemen. The District Inspector read out to me a document referring to the original order of 1915 that I should leave "the following area, namely Ireland", and instructing me either to leave Ireland or to go to the area marked on the map originally shown to me in Arbour Hill, and remain there. I made no comment and gave no indication of what I intended to do. However, I went on to Skibbereen a couple of days later and took up editorship of the paper.

Seamus O'Brien was in charge of the accounts and of the business side generally, subject to my supervision. I found that the paper had been practically bankrupt before Sinn Féin purchased it

for a few hundred pounds. Actually it was bankrupt only because for some years previously the Board had consisted entirely of priests who would not proceed against the people who owed money to the paper and were not paying. Seamus O'Brien and I set to and sent out solicitor's letters or civil bills to a large number of people, and very soon we got in more money from what had been regarded as bad debts than covered the total amount paid by the new Sinn Féin company for the whole concern. There was a Father Boyle of Headnesford who for years previously had advertisements in the paper for subscriptions to his church, and advertisements being always headed, "Lourdes and Headnesford". He had taken advantage of the fact that the old Board of the company consisted entirely of priests and he had never paid. O'Brien and I sent him a solicitor's letter and threatened court proceedings, and we got about £60 from him immediately. We were, therefore, very quickly in a position to remove any doubt about the paper being able to carry on.

We had some difficulties in obtaining newsprint, but once we had money in hand and could pay in advance we overcame those difficulties. Generally the whole prospect looked easy and interesting.

It was at that point that I went over definitely in favour of Roman type for Irish. Before I took charge a weekly half column in Irish had been set up by hand, and it was impossible to increase the space given to the language unless the linotype was used.

Both linotypes were needed for matter in English, and we could not afford to have a magazine of Irish type fitted to either of them. Accordingly I proceeded to get additional matter in Irish - a substantial amount of it supplied by Peadar Ó Hannrachâin and four or five local teachers of Irish - set up on the linotype in Roman type.

After I had been six weeks or so in charge of "The Southern Star" I arrived one day at my lodgings for lunch, and before I sat down the local District Inspector, with a body of police, arrived to arrest me for breach of the expulsion order. I think it must have been in February or perhaps early in March. The year was 1918.

I was taken to the railway station to await departure of the train for Cork. Very few people saw us driving to the station but the word that I had been arrested spread rapidly through the town and crowds began to come up to the railway station. I was taken into the waiting-room and a large number of police guarded the approaches. When the train drew into the station the police asked me to walk across to the carriage, which I refused to do unless I were taken by the arms. I did not resist, but the sight of me being, as it were, forcibly brought across the platform aroused the crowd. As the train moved out, some stone-throwing began and one of the stones came through the window and past my ear. Fortunately I was not cut.

The arrest took place on Saturday at midday, and I immediately determined to join in the hunger-strike which at that time was being carried on by three or four prisoners in Mountjoy. I found no difficulty at all in refusing food or drink. I was not sufficiently informed about the technique of hunger-striking at the time to know that the hunger-strikers always took water. About the middle of the day on Monday I was transferred up to a hospital cell and given a spring bed. As I complained to the doctor of cold I was also given extra blankets.

Once I was moved up to the sick cell I did not get out of bed, as I felt the cold pretty severely. My meals were brought up regularly and placed beside the bed, but I felt no definite appetite except for the very first meal which I refused - the supper meal on Saturday. A large mug of water was always on the table beside the bed, but I found no difficulty in abstaining from drinking either. The effects of the thirst-strike began to be felt very soon. I found the skin coming off my lips, and on one occasion towards the end I woke up and had to put my finger into my mouth to take my tongue off my palate. During the last day or so I slept a great deal, and, although I had never even tasted stout in my life, I dreamed, every time I dozed off, of a huge tankard of stout with an enormous head on it.

On Wednesday about midday chairs and a table were brought into my cell, and two or three military officers came in and looked at the place and went away again. It was clear that it was proposed to carry

out or at least to open my court-martial with me in bed there in the infirmary cell. But after the military doctor had examined me and reported that, as a result of four days without either water or food, I was in an unsatisfactory state, the table and chairs were removed.

That night about seven o'clock a warder who came in to see me slipped me a newspaper in which it was said that the men in Mountjoy were continuing the hunger-strike and were taking nothing but water. My first reaction was to continue with the hunger and thirst strike as I had begun it. After some time, however, I said to myself that I should take one mouthful of water while I was thinking the matter over. Once I began to drink, however, I did not leave the mug down until I had swallowed the whole pint and a half. After that I drank normally and felt very much better though I continued the hunger-strike for four or five days more until whatever was at issue in Mountjoy was settled.

It appears that after the train went out of Skibbereen to the accompaniment of stone-throwing, a good deal of excitement arose in the town, and at a meeting held that night strong speeches were delivered. As a result of these speeches, Barney O'Driscoll, one of the Directors of "The Southern Star" and now owner of the Killaloe slate quarries, was arrested. On Monday night a warder allowed me down from the sick cell to speak to Barney O'Driscoll through his door. The warder had no key to Barney's cell and could not let us come together. He also asked me not to speak in a loud voice, so we could not have much of a

conversation.

About a week after the hunger-strike was finished I was court-martialled. I was charged with having been found in the town of Skibbereen contrary to an order under the Defence of the Realm Act. I was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. At that time prisoners had been removed from Mountjoy to Dundalk. A great number of arrests were being effected and all Sinn Féiners were being sent to Dundalk I was, however, kept for about a fortnight in Cork. Amongst the people who visited me a number of times there was Seán Jennings. J.C. Dowdall also visited me.

Ultimately I was taken up to Dundalk, where I discovered that the question of providing a Protestant Chaplain was the cause of the delay in sending me there.

In Dundalk I found Michael Brennan, Seán Treacy and Seamus O'Neill, who had been the three first in, Oscar Traynor, Dick McKee, Paddy Sweeney of Dublin, Terence MacSwiney, a group of men from Westport, half a dozen local men, Colivet and Jim McInerney from Limerick, and Diarmuid Lynch. Michael Brennan was Commandant of the prisoners. I think we must have been about one hundred strong when the prison was full. We divided ourselves into messes and had our meals four or five together in a cell. I was with Seán Treacy, Michael Brennan and Seamus O'Neill. That was the first time that I got to know Seán Treacy well. Paddy Sweeney organised a so-called secret society known as "The Roughs and Toughs", with

initiation ceremonies, secret signs and passwords. Someone got up an opposition body called "The Ku Klux Klan", into which Dick McKee, Michael Brennan and I, amongst others, were initiated.

There were one or two warders who were very friendly to the prisoners and were Sinn Féiners in their way. At least one of them had promised that if conscription was to be applied he would, at any cost to himself, find the means of letting us all out. He was Frawley from Killonan in County Limerick.

While in Dundalk I remember Terry MacSwiney talking to me about the surrender of the arms in Cork. He told me that they had been put in charge of, I think, the Mayor, for safe keeping and on the understanding that they would not be touched by the British. I may say that the account he gave me of the affair, struck me as not being quite candid. It was the only time that I can remember Terence MacSwiney telling me something which I took to be false. Apparently, for various reasons, the surrender of the arms in Cork during Easter Week was a matter which preyed a good deal on his mind, and he regretted taking whatever line he took at the time. His remarks to me in Dundalk Gaol came forcibly back to my mind when Annie MacSwiney told me of his last message to Cathal Brugha a day or two before he died on hunger-strike. The message, as far as I remember, ran something like the following: "Cathal, this blots out the bitterness of Easter Week". I saw a great deal of Terence MacSwiney during our period in Dundalk, more as it happened that I had seen of him in Reading.

The principal item of interest during the period we were in Dundalk was the marriage of Diarmuid Lynch. He was to be deported as an American citizen at the end of his sentence. He was engaged to be married and knew that if the marriage did not come off before he was sent out of the country, the girl would probably be refused a passport and not be able to join him. He made application to the Castle for leave to get married in the prison just before the end of his sentence. He got back from the Castle a rather nasty letter asking what special reasons he could give in support of his application. This annoyed him very much, and I think it was at least partly in consequence of the tone of the official letter that he determined to outwit the authorities. A priest who was a friend of his visited him along with the girl and her sister. They asked, by arrangement, to see Michael Brennan and, I think, Frank Thornton and another along with Diarmuid Lynch. The rule then was that the prisoners went behind a rail held by a trestle which stretched along one side of the room and the visitors stood behind another rail on the opposite side of the room. The priest stooped under the rail and brought the girl with him, saying, "I want to talk to you two." The warder did not like to object to the priest doing this, and stood by . Meantime Michael Brennan and Thornton talked in loud voices to the girl's sister across the way. The priest put his arm round the necks of Diarmuid Lynch and the girl and pretended to be carrying on a whispered conversation

with them. The warder spotted nothing and the visit came to an end. Word that the pair had been married passed round amongst the prisoners, but the warder heard it only when the priest had announced it outside and word was brought to the Governor.

The Governor was in a state about the occurrence and suspended the warder. However, he became satisfied that the warder, Dillane, I think, was not an accomplice. The Governor himself apparently got into no trouble with the Castle and the whole thing blew over. When Diarmuid Lynch was being taken away we demonstrated a bit in the prison, but we had no real clash with the authorities.

Ultimately we were reduced to about twenty-four in Dundalk and the police came in to take us to the train for transference to Belfast. Some of the prisoners were going to fight against being handcuffed, but eventually they agreed to being handcuffed two by two, as the police said they were bound to handcuff us unless we gave our word not to try to escape, which we refused to do. The handcuffing drew plenty of attention to us at the railway station and on the train.

We arrived in Belfast sometime in July and found a large number of prisoners there occupying "A" and "B" wings. Austin Stack was the prisoners' Commandant and Michael Fleming, a brother of Paddy Fleming, was Vice Commandant.

Amongst the prisoners in Belfast were Kevin O'Higgins, Seamus Burke, who afterwards became

Minister for Local Government, Seán Ó Siothcháin of the Hospitals Trust, Jack McKenna of Listowel, Dan O'Mahoney, the famous African lion-hunter from Castleisland, Andy Byrne who was at one time in the early days Secretary of Sinn Féin, Eoin O'Duffy, Dan Hogan, Joe McMahon from Clare, who was blown up later while making bombs in County Wexford, Fionán Lynch, Tadhg Brosnan from Castlegregory, Gaffney, afterwards a member of the Dáil, and James Lennon from Carlow. Paddy Belton, later on a member of the Dáil, was also in Belfast. At the maximum our numbers reached about two hundred.

There had been some rows in the prison before we arrived, and on one occasion at least a warder had used his baton on Joe McMahon. The prisoners were also carrying on an agitation for a different dietary, and as part of the campaign were refusing to accept parcels of food from friends outside. The prisoners from Dundalk had been receiving parcels there, and were discinclined to fall in with the rule which was in operation in Belfast when they arrived there.

I might say here by way of a sidelight, that at that time sugar was rationed and was very scarce through the country, but we in prison were never without plenty of it. One day in Dundalk when our sugar supply was running low and some of the group objected to Seán Treacy putting three large spoonfuls of it into his porridge, Seán said that the Lord would provide and that he was showing his trust in the

Appendix 6

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

Form to be completed and inserted in the original record

in place of each part abstracted

(i) **Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed:** WS 9391.1

(ii) **How many documents have been abstracted:** 1 p

(iii) **The date of each such document:** 12/4/54

(iv) **The description of each document:**

WS 939 Witness statement Emer Glynn p90.
details of a personal nature

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) **Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:**

(c)**Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.**

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

Lord. He was justified in his confidence because one of the group got seven pounds of sugar in by the forenoon post that very day.

A little bad blood arose between the men who had been in Belfast before we arrived and the incoming Dundalk group, and definite ill-feeling was shown by Austin Stack towards Michael Brennan who was Commandant of the Dundalk men. Stack made some remarks about people who tried to get special treatment for Clare men on all occasions.

A few days after we arrived a play entitled "Let us Spray" was performed, about which the only thing I remember was that Kevin O'Higgins was one of the actors and that a lad named Gascoyne from Dun Laoghaire, was also one of the players. Amongst the stage properties figuring prominently in the play was a large sweet cake, the "no parcels" rule having been relaxed sufficiently to allow this one cake in. When the play was over and the actors had received a couple of rounds of applause, a rush took place from the audience and the cake was seized, divided and devoured. Largely as a result of that demonstration Stack agreed to the "no parcels" rule being abolished, and all the prisoners began to accept parcels. There was a good deal of waste of food in consequence of too much being sent in. I myself on occasions saw two or three pounds of butter being thrown into the swill buckets, and, of course, far more cigarettes were supplied than were reasonably necessary.

After some time Eamon Fleming was released, and the question of electing a Vice-Commandant arose. As Michael Brennan had been Commandant in Dundalk I thought he would be elected, and mentioned it round the prison. I found, however, that there was considerable opposition to him, and a regular campaign was carried on. One of the most effective pieces of propaganda against him was that he was a militarist martinet who would insist on the galvinised chamber pots being kept shining.

When the meeting was held in the laundry for the election my name was proposed. I tried to decline, but Stack ruled that I could not decline nomination. I think that perhaps the reason my name was put up was that soon after coming to the prison I had started a weekly manuscript magazine which was read every Sunday afternoon to the assembled crowd in the laundry. We called it Glór na Corcrach. It was, as far as I remember, pretty good. Kevin O'Higgins regularly contributed a serious article once a fortnight and a humorous article once a fortnight. Jim Burke also contributed regularly, and Terence MacSwiney contributed several songs and a number of serious articles. I generally did the leading article myself. One of my articles which dealt with the question of facing the threat of conscription was sent out by somebody and was published by headquarters in "An t-Óglach". In any case, the weekly reading of the magazine made me well known to all the prisoners Consequently when the election ultimately took place and Stack forced me to stand, on the basis that we

were all bound to give service as required by the general body, Michael Brennan asked the men not to vote for him and I was elected practically unanimously.

By way of revenge on the people who insisted on electing me because they did not want any militarism, I made the whole regime about four times as strict as it had been under Eamon Fleming, and stricter than it would have been under Michael Brennan. People afterwards said that they had voted for me because they had wanted a quiet easy life in the prison and that I had given it to them in the neck. Actually, however, regular parades and strict rules about washing cells and washing clothes were very much to the good. There were prisoners who would have lain in bed half the day if they had not been compelled to appear on the nine o"clock morning parade. There were prisoners also who would not have washed their clothes with any regularity if they had not been compelled to come down on the appropriate day to the weekly laundry parade, and at least let me see them putting their dirty underclothing into water.

There was continuous practical joking in the prison. Kevin O'Higgins was one of a crowd of water-throwers who caused great annoyance to many other prisoners. They often stood with cans of water on the top balcony and emptied them down on people passing below. All sorts of foolish and boyish tricks were played. The practice of forming so-called secret societies which had existed in Dundalk was also to the fore in Belfast. A "No collar" brigade was

formed and men went round the prison taking the collar and tie off anyone whom they found wearing them. Some little friction arose with the authorities because on one occasion a warder was seized and the collar taken off him. The result of the activities of the "no collar" brigade was the formation of a society known as the "collar and tie" society. One morning about half-past nine when the men were dismissed after the morning parade in the yard a large number of them suddenly disappeared. They came back wearing their shoes and trousers but nothing else except collars and ties round their bare necks. One friendly warder spoke to me about this incident and told me how humiliated he was at seeing men going around the yard like half-naked savages, as he said, "with all them Orange warders looking at them".

The "collar and tie" men, of whom Kevin O'Higgins was one, being very lightly clad had an advantage in the water-throwing contests over their rivals. I have a picture of a man being held down on the ground by four others while Kevin poured a large bucket of water over him, beginning at his head and going slowly down to his toes.

Terence MacSwiney was not very long with us in Belfast. The first and only time I saw his wife was while we were there. She came up to Belfast for about a fortnight and came to see him every day, asking occasionally for some other prisoner who was a friend of his to share the visit. The regular thing was a visit per week for each prisoner,

but in a case like this the authorities allowed daily visits. Also people like Austin Stack and myself who held office amongst the prisoners were allowed to see anybody who asked for us. We sometimes had two or three visits per day. There was apparently a very large Branch of Cumann na mBan in Belfast, and between members of that Branch and people from outside all prisoners had one visit a week at any rate.

A lot of the prisoners had hopes of a German victory almost up to the date of the Armistice. I remember while we were in Dundalk during the last big German push we all thought the British were going to be forced to abandon the Channel ports. Right up to the end, although things had begun to look bad, hope continued amongst the prisoners. When the Armistice finally came there was a great atmosphere of gloom throughout the whole place. However, when the cheering began outside the prison, some of our men got on to the laundry roof, from which they could see out into the Shankill Road, and waved a Tri-colour, but some amongst the crowd appeared to have catapults and pebbles began to fly round the men on the roof and ultimately they had to abandon their position. Then the warders shut us in from the yard.

Immediately afterwards the selection of candidates for the general election began to be canvassed. Eoin O'Duffy at one stage asked me if I would stand for Monaghan. The reason that I was considered was apparently a quarrel between Dr. Ward

and Seán MacEntee or between their supporters. MacEntee's people belonged to North Monaghan and he wished to stand for that Constituency. Dr. Ward and Dr. McCarvill opposed him, Dr. Ward being anxious to stand himself. The affair became so bitter that, in order to win the election in a Constituency with a substantial Unionist vote and a fairly strong Hibernian organisation, it was necessary to bring in a stranger to whom there was no local objection. I had never been in Monaghan except for the week I spent in Father Ó Ciarán's house waiting for my arrest, but apparently that slight connection, as things were at the time, sufficed to get me selected. Ultimately I was visited by Seán Keenan, the local solicitor who had been appointed Sinn Féin election agent and signed whatever papers had to be signed. I then wrote an election address. I gave it to Fionán Lynch, who was having a visitor, to be smuggled out for publication. The visitor was a De La Salle Brother who was a very nervous man, and as he left the cell the warder said something to him about not taking anything out. The Brother became frightened that he might be searched and handed up my election address. The result was that I was summoned to the Governor's office next day and told that I had committed a breach of the regulations by attempting to smuggle the address out. I had no option then but to ask the Governor if there was anything objectionable in it. He said there was not, and after some talk he agreed to let it go out in the ordinary course.

Before this had happened all regulations within the prison had broken down in consequence of the 'flu epidemic. Previous to the 'flu we had been locked in our cells every night from seven o'clock onwards. When a lot of the men fell sick during the 'flu we raised a great row about the possibility of people dying in the night without getting attention, and the Governor agreed that cells might be left open all night so that Orderlies might make the rounds.

Very few escaped the 'flu. Up to a certain point we had full parades every day. Then there came a morning when half a dozen were sick. By the time the evening parade was reached the half dozen had grown to twenty. At last, out of the two hundred men in the prison barely thirty were on their feet. Stack fell ill early. I visited every cell each day but fortunately did not fall ill. A lot of the prisoners were pretty bad, with a great deal of bleeding from the nose. Two men went off their heads and had to be removed to a mental institution. We had, however, no deaths. Part of the reason for this may have been that the prison authorities supplied brandy with the greatest liberality.

Before the general election actually came on we planned an escape, hoping to bring it off a few days before the voting. The whole plan was made relatively easy by the fact that we were never locked up. One prisoner had been allowed to bring

in a fretsaw for hobby work that he was doing. With its help we were able to cut up some bedboards to make telescope ladders. Father McGeehan the assistant chaplain, who is now Bishop of Down and Connor, brought in nuts, bolts, hacksaws and footprint spanners to us. Two telescoping ladders were made out of bedboards, the sections when extended being bolted together. Finally all plans were ready for an escape.

A group of men who had only a few weeks to serve had formed themselves into a band, and they performed with tin drums and whistles in the circle every night, as they would do on the critical night to cover any noise that might be made while we were taking the bolts off the back gate with the footprints spanners. We were to go over the wall, with the help of the telescopic ladders and of ropes made from sheets, which would enable us to descend on the far side of the wall into the grounds of St. Malachi's College. Unfortunately a few days before the date fixed for the escape one of the Collisons of Toomevara was released and he reported the whole matter to Volunteer Headquarters. Headquarters, instead of leaving well enough alone and letting us get through the Falls Road district of Belfast and out into the country as best we could, decided that the scheme must be postponed for a week when they would have made arrangements made for motor cars to bring us all sorts of places.

Just five minutes before the outer gate was

locked which would cut us off from the men in the hospital who were to act with the rest, Father McGeehan arrived with a Volunteer message to me that the escape must be postponed. I just had time to get across to the hospital before the gates were locked to tell Michael Brennan not to act that night.

As a consequence of the preparations made, some of the "lags" who did orderly duty had noticed earlier in the evening that sheets were missing from some of the cells. However the news got out, the prison authorities learned before the next night that an escape had been planned, and a military picket was posted at the only point where we could have got into the grounds of St. Malachi's. That finished the attempt to escape, but it left all the men bursting for some sort of a fight with the prison authorities.

At this time there was in the "criminal" wing a man called Doran from County Down who had been sentenced for some political offence but was kept amongst the ordinary prisoners. Our men determined to bring him over to our group. When Mass was over on a particular Sunday they managed to block the warders at the chapel door. Doran, accompanied by one of our men, pushed his way out of the chapel and came across to B Wing. In case of an immediate search, it had been arranged that he would go up between the roof of the cells and the slates. There was a trapdoor in the roof of the lavatory.

While the rest of the prisoners were out at

Mass I had got three or four tables from the cells and made a platform on which stools could be set so as to enable a man to get up through the trapdoor. I also had some food and drink and blankets placed ready.

When Doran and his companion came through they rushed to this lavatory cell. With the help of the other man and myself Doran got up through the trapdoor. Then I helped the other man up and Doran reahced down for him. I then handed up the food and blankets to them. They closed the trapdoor and I quickly got the tables and stools back to the cells to which they belonged.

When the warders arrived there was no trace of Doran anywhere in our wing. They did not, however, make a really exhaustive search. We were afraid of police being brought in, and Doran and the other prisoner remained up under the slates all day. Meantime we adopted the policy of warning the warders not to look into any of the cells as they passed by. Later on the two prisoners came down from their uncomfortable hideout, when it seemed to us that no immediate incursion of the R.I.C. was going to take place.

Christmas came on and although the authorities knew perfectly well that Doran was with us, the warders, having been warned not to look for him, took care not to do so and Doran kept out of the way. Meantime we had been considering what we should do in case a big search was conducted. We decided

that the thing to do was to isolate ourselves in "B" Wing. There were heavy weights on the oldfashioned mangles in the laundry which were of the kind in which pressure is applied not by a spring but by weighted levers. These weights were at least 56 lbs. each. We decided that with these weights it would be easy to break the metal steps of the stairs and also the slate floor gallery which connected "B" Wing with "A" and "C" Wings. Accordingly we brought the weights into the first floor of "B" Wing. Meantime the cold war atmosphere was warming and several of the prisoners found that the metal steps could be removed from the stairs, so we took a good few of them out. Moreover we put up a barricade on the stairs so that the police could not come up quickly. We also built barricades on the slate balconies so that the police could not rush in from the other wings and take us unawares. The authorities, however, apparently decided not to take any action over Christmas, and several days passed quietly. Meanwhile we kept men watching from various vantage points to get an early glimpse of any R.I.C. men who might be coming, and these men had instructions to communicate with me immediately. One morning I was in my cell when a man burst in to me with the news that the R.I.C. were coming. I rushed round the place blowing my whistle. The men who had been sick in hospital were all on their feet at the time. They ran in to us. A fellow called Nugent from Keady area was having a bath in the wash-house when he heard the whistle. He jumped out and ran for

the main building, stark naked and dripping wet, with his clothes under his arm. He just made the passage by half a minute. The men with the half-cwts. get to work immediately and broke wide gaps in the galleries, and broke or knocked out the remaining steps in the stairs up to the first floor. Once the breaking started, nothing would stop the men. Somebody had already noticed that the heavy railing round the galleries could be moved a little by shaking. A row of men started to sway the railing. At first it moved very little, but as they worked it got looser and finally it was moving several inches. They worked harder and in another minute or two about twenty tons of it went down with a crash, breaking some of the flags on the ground floor and going into the cellar passage. Once the breaking started all the railings were pushed down. Then some of the men climbed up through the trapdoor in the lavatory ceiling and proceeded to move over the arched ceilings of the upper cells and knock the slates off the roof.

All Crumlin Road had heard the noise in the prison, but did not know what was going on. They could, however, see the slates flying off the roof. I went up through the trapdoor and by the time I arrived I found that about half the slates were gone. An R.I.C. party came out into the yard and threatened to fire so I brought the men down.

A new fear then struck me, that the slates having been taken off the roof the R.I.C. would try to invade us by that route. Joe McMahon was a

carpenter and he put up a kind of under-lid on the trapdoor. He used up a lot of bedboards and fastened the under-lid so firmly with props from the floor that it would take people coming in from the roof a long time to get down. Then the idea arose amongst us that the water would be cut off, as it actually was a little later for a period of twenty-four hours. Meantime all vessels that would hold water were filled. Another scare was that the R.I.C. would fire through the big end window and prevent us moving from cell to cell, so barricades were put up against it consisting of bedboards and mattress. One of the humorous incidents connected with this was that a man called Dan Domigan from Keady, who had made a great deal of fun of Kevin O'Higgins earlier, had brought in a feather mattress for himself and was tremendously annoyed when his mattress was seized and stuffed into this rough barricade on the window.

I did not mention Domigan before. He was one of a small group of prisoners from Keady, and he had a wonderful sly sense of humour. He approached Kevin O'Higgins one day and told him that when the Keady prisoners got out there would be bands and a torchlight procession to meet them, and that he, as the leader of the group, would be called upon to make a speech. He said he wished to do justice to the occasion and asked Kevin to write a speech for him. Kevin thought this would be a good chance to make a hare of Domigan and proceeded to write an absurd "high-falutin" speech that would have

made an absolute joke of Dan in the eyes of intelligent people if he had delivered it. Dan, apparently, was delighted with Kevin's effort, and spent an hour nearly every day for a fortnight discussing it with him, suggesting improvements, additions and excisions. Kevin often told us about the amusing interviews he had "with this gaum". Then one day in the prison somebody suggested a County Council election. Dan Domigan was proposed as a candidate, and proceeded to make an excellent fluent speech, showing that all the time he had been codding Kevin while Kevin thought he was codding him.

Before we found out what Domigan was like he had fun with some other prisoners. For instance, he wrote an effusive letter to Austin Stack stating that when he left the prison he was going to leave his feather mattress behind and asking Stack to do him the honour of accepting it. Stack thought Domigan was a simple fellow, who meant this as a compliment. Other people, I believe, were also privately promised the feather mattress by Domigan. The end of the mattress was that it fell from the barricade on the first floor on to the ground floor, and during the siege was completely destroyed by having slops and every sort of rubbish thrown down on it.

Having secured adequate water supplies for at any rate some days, I had a consultation with Stack and we brought the men together and warned them that if soldiers came in they were not to throw anything at them or engage in any fight, but simply to accept

the fact that the rising was over. We waited for some hours, but no soldiers appeared. We then became anxious about food and decided to collect all that the various prisoners had, put it together in one cell and ration it out. As it happened, nearly all the prisoners had had parcels of cooked meat or fowl for Christmas, and there was really a great deal of food available amongst us, although there was practically no bread. Along with Joe Dillon and Michael Weddick I visited and searched all the cells, because some prisoners were trying to hold on to part of what they had. We ultimately got what we thought would last for about a fortnight with strict rationing and put it all in one cell under guard. We told the men to spend a good deal of time in bed. We served out a meal at twelve o'clock in the day and another at twelve o"clock at night. We gave each man about five or six ounces of meat and about two ounces of bread or cake. Somebody had a bag of rice, and in one of the cells we made a hearth of a cell door with the iron side up and broke up some bed-boards for fuel. One of the prisoners made soup with bones and the rice, and it was served out that night. Curiously enough, somebody had flour and Joe McMahon made pancakes of a sort with it, which we also served out.

The prison authorities after one day restored the flow of water and apparently made up their minds simply to let us exhaust our rations and surrender then. We were so sparing with the food that we knew we could last a good while.

Finally Larry O'Neill, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, arrived in the prison with Most Rev. Dr. MacRory, Bishop of Down and Connor, and proceeded to negotiate. Stack and I went down the banisters of the stairs to them, and several interviews took place. Ultimately it was agreed that we should surrender, and that Doran - over whom nominally the row had begun - would get political treatment. We, however, who had never been locked up, day or night, in cells since the 'flu epidemic, had to agree that we should be locked up at night, as we had been before the 'flu. Finally, after several interviews between Stack and the mediators the dispute was settled. We moved across with our possessions to "C" Wing.

The atmosphere, however, was uneasy. Some of the prisoners could not be controlled. One man called Tommy Fitzpatrick from Cavan, on a couple of occasions during the night set his linen sheet alight outside the window. A little later the Governor complained of this misconduct, and Stack and I agreed to try to stop it. Once in the middle of the night Fitzpatrick, who had some small bars of iron in his possession, proceeded to make holes in the wall of his cell. Stack was summoned, but Fitzpatrick refused to give him any satisfaction. For some reason Fitzpatrick was very friendly with me, and Stack asked the warders to unlock my cell and bring me down. When I went down Fitzpatrick said that he handed me an iron bar. We went back to

our cells thinking the row was over, but actually Tommy had a second bar, with which he began to operate again an hour or so later. We heard him hammering away, but we were not brought out of our cells.

The following morning the R.I.C. searched our cells and removed the extra furniture from them. We were informed that political treatment was suspended and that if we went out into the yard we would have to exercise under supervision.

The men immediately began planning some new activity. A man called Higgins, who is now running a typewriting business in Nassau Street, had noticed that it was quite easy to break down the iron doors by putting a book in between the jamb and the door itself and swinging it strongly, and that had been done extensively during the post Christmas revolt. Somebody else had discovered that by taking the middle board from a bedboard it was possible to have an obstruction running from the door to the opposite wall. Word was passed round amongst the men that they were to loosen the middle board in their bedboards. It was arranged that on the following Sunday morning immediately the men came back from Mass that they should barricade their doors in this way. Actually there was nearly being a hitch, because I was usually taken out to the Protestant Service about five minutes after the men came back from Mass. On this particular Sunday morning I barricaded my door

immediately the others came back in order to prevent myself being taken away from the crowd. Some of the men who came back from Mass did not barricade their doors as promptly as they ought to have, and if the warders had been spry when they discovered what I had done and had unlocked the doors and sprung the locks the whole plan would have been defeated, but actually, although the warders were suspicious, they were not prompt enough and ultimately all the doors were barricaded.

When the doors were barricaded all of us, having previously got pieces of iron, proceeded to try to make passages through the walls to each other's cells. Personally, though I got a number of stones and bricks out, I did not go much distance towards making a useful hole, but some of the men succeeded and were actually able to crawl through to the next cell. As soon as the prison authorities learned what we were doing R.I.C. were brought in and they proceeded to smash down the doors. The whole business took three or four hours. As soon as each door was finally knocked down a number of R.I.C. men came in to each cell and gradually we were all handcuffed. We were handcuffed with our hands behind our backs. That was the only time I had experience of such a thing. While it caused no inconvenience for a while I found that after a few hours it produced a rather severe pain at the points of the shoulders and down the shoulder-blades. We were kept like that for several days, the only relaxation being that the handcuffs were changed and

we were handcuffed in front for meals and at night.

After the doors had been sledged down we were removed to another wing and were given cells in which there was no breakable furniture, nothing except a mattress on the floor. It was rather uncomfortable at night, because the weather was cold and one found it hard to get the clothes right over one with the hands handcuffed even in front. For fear anybody should fall if he got up in the dark, the authorities put a nightlight in each cell. After four or five days, however, the handcuffing ceased, but we were kept locked up for several weeks more, in fact until I was released. I believe that the other prisoners were kept continually in cells for two or three more months until some of them were taken over to a prison in England.

After I was released from Belfast Gaol I came without delay to Dublin. A meeting of the Dáil was in progress and I met various people. De Valera asked me to go to lunch with him, and after talking for a while about his plans for working the Dáil he asked me would I join the Government as Director of Trade and Commerce. I had been intending at this point to go back to Skibbereen, but Michael Collins had said to me that I ought to stay in Dublin, and had in fact told me the day before that he and others would look out to see if they could get me a job in Dublin. Consequently I accepted de Valera's offer, and my appointment as Director of Trade and Commerce was confirmed by the Dáil a day or two afterwards.

While I was editing the manuscript journal in Belfast Gaol I wrote an article which dealt with the attitude to be adopted in case an attempt were made by the British to apply conscription to this country. A number of the prisoners thought the article was very good and asked for a copy of it. This copy was taken out of the prison by some man, whose term was expired, and handed in to Volunteer Headquarters. Apparently it was printed in "An t-Óglach", and portions of it were later reproduced in Piaras Beaslaoi's book on Collins. I think that this article was one of the reasons why Collins wanted me to remain in Dublin when released from Belfast. He had some idea of having me do a good deal of propagandist writing. Actually I was for a very short time in charge of "An t-Oglach". Piaras Beaslaoi was the editor, but he was arrested for something and was a month or two in prison. The consequence was that I attended two or three meetings of the Headquarters Staff of the Volunteers. I remember little of any consequence in connection with most of the meetings. On one occasion we were meeting in, I think, Gloucester Street and had not been more than an hour there when a message came for Michael Collins. I gather that it was from the detective, MacNamara, who was one of his agents. At any rate it appeared that the entry of several of the members into the building had been noted by somebody who communicated with the Castle. Consequently Collins directed that the meeting should end at once and that we should disperse.

The only thing of importance that I remember from my attendance at staff meetings was Dick McKee's

proposal for attacks on a British Army parade through the City which was to be held on, I presume, 11th November, 1919. Lord French was to take the salute at the Bank of Ireland and there was to be a very formidable display of British forces. Dick McKee had the opinion, which he had expressed on other occasions, that it would be impossible to keep the Volunteer organisation alive on the lines on which we had been proceeding from 1916 up to that point. He accordingly pioneered the notion of shooting French himself from across the street when he was taking the salute as the British forces marched through College Green, and of later, as soon as the signal had been given in College Green, firing on the British forces at various points. This idea commended itself to the Headquarters Staff generally. Though discussions must have taken place in various small groups I heard no part of them. At any rate a full meeting was held a day or two before the parade was due, the intention being to make final arrangements for the activities that had been planned. We were told when we met that Griffith had been informed of the matter and had asked Cathal Brugha to meet him and discuss it with him. We were given to understand that nothing further could be done until Cathal Brugha arrived. Meantime Dick McKee did talk a little, in a rather casual way, about the proceedings which he envisaged. After we had been together about an hour and a half, Cathal Brugha arrived and vetoed the attempt. He retailed to us various arguments which Griffith had used, amongst them being that the country was not yet sufficiently firmly on our side for anything of the kind to be carried out, and that the effect in America and elsewhere would be adverse.

It is worth noting that, although Cathal Brugha attacked Griffith very fiercely during the Treaty debates, he had at this time great respect for Griffith's political judgment, and very frequently deferred to him in a marked way on matters of general policy, as he was accustomed to defer afterwards to de Valera. This meeting, of course, took place many months after I had become Director of Trade and Commerce.

For a time after my appointment as Director of Trade and Commerce my office consisted of part of a table in No. 6 Harcourt Street, which also accommodated Lawrence Ginnell (who was, I think, Director of Propaganda, but whether for the Dáil or for Sinn Féin I do not remember) and Mr. Ginnell's secretary.

I had at first no idea of what activities I should attempt to undertake. Eoin MacNeill was Minister for Industry, and it might have been hard to say where Industry ended and Trade and Commerce began. It soon became apparent, however, that MacNeill had no intention of functioning. He not only did not attempt to create a department, but he practically never attended a meeting of the Ministry. As far as I remember, he was present at only two meetings altogether before the Truce. My range, therefore, was, in practice, Industry and Commerce in so far as it was anything.

A man called O'Leary from Wexford came to see me and said the Dáil should take steps to promote a dressed meat trade with Britain. His arguments impressed me very much, and I visited the small

dressed meat factory at Wexford. But before I could do more than summon, in conjunction with Robert Barton, a meeting of farmers in Waterford, the British soldiers raided No. 6 Harcourt Street. Collins escaped to the room, but I was arrested along with Paddy O'Keeffe, the Secretary of Sinn Féin. After a day or two in the Bridewell, we were taken to Mountjoy where we were kept for a month or two before being tried. At that time the policy was that untried prisoners did not go on hunger-strike but that men went on hunger-strike when sentenced.

A warder, who was very friendly and was in charge of prison repairs, came to me and said that Collins was prepared to make arrangements for my rescue. As, however, I knew that I had been arrested because of a letter for Dick Mulcahy which had been handed to me by James Kennedy of Nenagh, and which had been found on me in a police search half-an-hour afterwards, and as I did not know what was in the letter or what propagandist use might be made of it, I said that I preferred to be court-martialled. When I was brought up for preliminary hearing I learned the contents of the letter for the first time. It advocated a system of attacks on the parents and relatives of R.I.C. men, which was something of which I completely disapproved. I said at the court-martial that I had no knowledge of the contents of the letter until it was read for me at the preliminary hearing and that I disagreed with everything in it. As the policeman who first searched me had put the letter back in my pocket without re-inserting it in the envelope and as the District Inspector who followed him did not notice the empty

envelope, Dick Mulcahy's name did not come into the case.

The sentence of the Court was one year's imprisonment, and, as others were doing, I immediately went on hunger-strike. I was not more than four or five days on hunger-strike when I was released and transferred to the Mater Hospital, where I remained for a few days.

After I was released I was about to visit the Dáil Éireann offices which were in 76 Harcourt St., a house recently purchased, No. 6 having been left to Sinn Féin. As I arrived near the house I saw lorries around and realised that a raid was in progress. If I had been half an hour earlier I should have walked into a fresh arrest. Collins this time also escaped by the roof. As a matter of fact he owed his escape to the circumstance that a member of the staff, a Miss Lawless, looked out the window and saw the soldiers coming, rushed to the front door and slipped the Yale lock. The result was that the soldiers were sufficiently delayed in getting in to enable Collins to get on the roof and finally get down by a rather dangerous jump into the Standard Hotel. After that, 76 Harcourt St. was not used by any members of the Government.

Very shortly before my arrest, and only two days after the search at the Tipperary Aeriocht at which the Kennedy letter was taken from me, I had, as a result of my earlier conversations with Mr. O'Leary, visited the small dressed meat factory which he was running in Wexford town. I stayed the couple of nights I was in Wexford with Dr. Jim Ryan, who was then a medical practitioner in the town. My visit to the factory and my talks with the other people connected with it convinced me that O'Leary's ideas were correct.

After I returned to Dublin I got in touch with Robert Barton, who was Minister for Agriculture. He agreed with me,

and we jointly approached the I.A.O.S. who were, of course, eager to have an agricultural industry on a co-operative basis established. I appointed Joe Dillon, now in the Department of Industry and Commerce, whom I had known well in Belfast Gaol, as an organiser to co-operate with the I.A.O.S. in establishing a Farmers' Co-operative Society to inaugurate a dressed meat trade like that carried on between Aberdeen and London. A meeting was arranged for Waterford City, the circular inviting large numbers of people whose names were supplied by the I.A.O.S. being signed by Barton and myself. By the time the day for the meeting arrived I was on the run, and Barton, who had been arrested, was in jail. The meeting selected Sir John Keane, who was a prominent member of the Farmers' Union, to be Chairman. I understand that Keane made some very testy remarks about the absence of the two men who had called the meeting. However, Courtney, the organiser of the I.A.O.S., managed to get the meeting going. A resolution in favour of forming a co-operative society for the purpose mentioned was passed, and a committee established.

Joe Dillon, my representative, along with Courtney, representing the I.A.O.S., spent over a year travelling the surrounding counties organising meetings of farmers, usually with the assistance of the local creamery managers, addressing them, collecting subscriptions at the meetings, and going round visiting individuals afterwards and inducing them to subscribe for shares. Ultimately, the money necessary was collected. The factory was built and opened and is now operated by Clover Meats.

After getting out of prison I opened an office in Fleet St. We went through the formality of registering what was called the Irish and Overseas Shipping and Trading Co., Ltd. as a limited company. We got a huge brass plate and put it up on the office door. In addition to this we looked over various

trade papers for manufacturers on the continent who were looking for agents, and we offered to sell their goods for them. By this means we got a good deal of commercial correspondence into the office and a large pile of samples of all sorts of things which, as a rule, we never tried to sell, though on one occasion we did sell some French soap. Meantime, we tried various schemes to induce American shipping companies to send ships to Ireland and to put manufacturers in touch with outside markets. We also appointed a number of consuls abroad. Dermot Fawsitt was sent to New York as consul, F.L. Kerney was appointed consul in Paris, Count O'Kelly was appointed consul, first in Switzerland and afterwards in Belgium, and Donal Hales, a brother of Seán Hales, already resident in Italy and married to an Italian, was appointed consul in Italy. Contacts were effected with Irishmen in other countries, and information was sought about opportunities for the sale of Irish goods, or for imports that were heretofore reaching Ireland through England. I cannot say that any success worth mentioning was achieved.

Later on, the idea of a boycott of certain classes of British goods was developed. What we did in those cases was to make as careful inquiries as we could to find out whether Irish manufacturers could meet the country's needs in a certain article. We then issued an order to say that British goods of that kind, whether biscuits or boot polish, should not be sold here any more. In certain cases, manufacturers were by no means thankful for our ordering a boycott of the competing British articles. The most notable case was that of Messrs. Jacob's. We ordered a boycott of British biscuits, and Volunteers in various places took action to prevent shops selling them, but Jacob's, who were not troubled by the small imports of British biscuits, were afraid that our action might prejudice their sales abroad. The result was that the head of the firm, through Ned Stephens, afterwards parliamentary draughtsman, made an appointment to meet me and asked that the boycott be taken off.

I told him that the boycott was imposed as an act of economic warfare and that nothing could be done about it.

A good number of people had visited the offices of what we called the Irish Overseas Shipping and Trading Company, Ltd. and we got the idea that detectives were watching the premises; consequently, although we continued to hold the office and pay the rent and keep the brass plate up, we decided that we should move to other premises. We got a big room, through the agency of Frank Hugh O'Donnell, in Eustace St., not realising at the time that we were coming in practically second next door to the headquarters of the Dublin Brigade of Volunteers. O'Donnell got the tenant, a man called Hennessy who was a debts recovery agent, to sublet the room to him on the pretence that we were conducting a literary agency in which O'Donnell was interested. Some plays of Frank Hugh O'Donnell's had been produced shortly before that time, and he was accepted as a man of literary eminence.

We were not disturbed in our new premises in Hennessy's and continued in them practically up to the Truce. Hennessy, after a time, became aware that there was something fishy about us - we never had a charwoman in for example - and one morning I arrived a little late to find the staff packing up and getting ready for an evacuation because Hennessy had knocked at the door and told them that the previous night two tall men had come round to inquire from him who occupied that room. At first I thought we should clear out, but then the thought struck me that Hennessy was trying to scare us out by suggesting detectives. I decided then that the only thing was to scare him a little, so I sent a member of the staff down to warn him solemnly to give no information about us. We stayed there for months and were never suspected. One day we had to stay in the office for several hours because the police had got to know of the whereabouts of the Dublin Brigade, and were holding the street and raiding the house in which it was.

We, later, just about the time of the Truce, took an office in an upper floor of a house in Duke St. A month or two after the Truce we moved into offices in Grafton St. over a shop then owned by Kelly, now Kelly of Menswear.

During the interval Diarmuid Fawsitt had ceased to be Consul in New York, and I had got Joe Connolly of Belfast to go out in his stead.

The staff that I had consisted of two typists; D.J.Donoghue who was an accountant and dealt with the cash; Frank Meagher, who had a good deal of commercial experience and pioneered the Local Authorities Joint Purchasing Scheme; Joe Dillon, who most of the period was engaged on the fresh meat product, and Mairead Ni Ghrada, afterwards announcer in Radio Éireann, who interviewed any person in town or through the country whom I could not arrange to meet myself owing to being on the run. She was very good at the job and could be relied on to handle any negotiation very well.

Like most of the Ministries, except Local Government and Defence, the work of the Department of Trade and Commerce was mostly pretence, having no value except a propagandist value. The same could be said to my knowledge of the Department of Agriculture and of the Department of Fisheries, though money was expended on purchasing or aiding in the purchase of a number of fishing boats. Local Government was different because the local councils stood by it. Defence was the one real Ministry. Justice did something through the Dáil Courts, but, generally speaking, before the Truce the Courts were not so widespread or effective as they might have been, though I felt that Collins's criticisms of Austin Stack in this respect were too severe when he said at a meeting of the Dáil "Your department is a bloody joke". Even a more enterprising and active-minded man than Stack could only have achieved limited results.

During the first few months that I was in charge of the Department of Trade and Commerce I was not a member of the Cabinet and was called, not Minister, but Director. Shortly after my appointment I heard from Michael Brennan about certain I.R.B. activities in Limerick and Clare. As we now had the Dáil in existence and a Ministry appointed by the Dáil, I regarded the continued existence of the I.R.B. as improper. I told de Valera all the facts that had come to my knowledge and he was thankful for the information. When he was going to America he left a final instruction that I was to become a member of the Cabinet. I entertained the idea that he did this because he wanted another Minister who was sure not to be in the I.R.B. camp.

From the time of de Valera's departure for America until the Truce I was, I think, at all the weekly Cabinet meetings. There was from the beginning a certain amount of friction or tension between Collins and Cathal Brugha. It manifested itself in connection with all sorts of matters. I remember, for instance that Sceilg, who was very much a yes-man of Cathal Brugha's, put up certain proposals in connection with the safeguarding of the Irish language. They were, I thought myself, ridiculous. In any case Collins threw scorn on them and immediately Cathal Brugha, who might not have resented criticism of them by anyone else, proceeded to counter-attack Collins.

The Cabinet met in a great many places. It often met in Mrs. Humphreys', and sometimes in Madame O'Rahilly's. The first meeting, for instance, after de Valera's return from America was in Madame O'Rahilly's. It met a few times in Tom Montgomery's in Shrewsbury Road. It met quite a number of times in the house of Paddy Morgan, the dentist, in South Richmond Street. It met very often in Walter Cole's in Mountjoy Square. It met at least once or twice in the house of a man called Geoghegan in Drumcondra fairly near the canal. It met fairly frequently in John O'Mahoney's Hotel in Gardiner's Row.

Collins was always insistent that Cabinet meetings should be short. Once or twice when proceedings spun themselves out Collins said: "If we go on with these long meetings we will all be caught together". His idea was that even if a number of us were seen entering one of these houses and word was conveyed to the Castle, about an hour or so would elapse before a raiding party could arrive. Consequently, he tried to insist that meetings should last only about an hour.

Business at meetings was often routine, Ministers making their reports and some little discussion taking place, but as the Ministers' activities were mostly semi-fictional, we received each other's reports without much comment and without bothering to enter on much discussion. One case that occupied considerable time was a review of a death sentence for an ordinary criminal offence. Down in Co. Meath a man who wanted to grab certain land hired a fellow to fire on the owner when ploughing. Whether the intention was to kill the ploughman or the horses I do not know, but at any rate the ploughman was fatally wounded. A local Volunteer courtmartial was held. The gunman was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. The matter came up before the Cabinet as the authority vested with the prerogative of mercy. Madame Markievicz, I remember, was disinclined to sanction the carrying out of the sentence, but, ultimately, it was agreed that, as we were acting as a government and as the man had been tried by the only sort of court possible and had undoubtedly been guilty of murder, the sentence should be confirmed. It was duly carried out, I understand.

Another matter which occupied a good deal of time at one Cabinet meeting, if not at two, was the imposition of the Belfast boycott. I thought that it was a most ridiculous and shortsighted proposal, and although there was nobody else on the Cabinet opposed to it, I had the advantage of having some knowledge of the North which none of my colleagues had, and

was firm in my opposition. I argued so loudly and so strongly against the scheme that it was decided to take no action by way of Ministerial decision but to refer the matter to a forthcoming meeting of Dáil Éireann. When the Dáil meeting took place a week or two later, Madame Markievicz, who had been absent from the Cabinet meeting, was present and joined with me in opposing the inauguration of the Belfast boycott. Michael Staines and one or two other members joined in. Ultimately, instead of allowing the matter to go to a vote in the Dáil where, as far as I could see, the result would have been doubtful, and where, at any rate, a substantial number of deputies would go on record as against the boycott, Collins proposed that it be referred back to the Government. When it came before the next meeting of the Government there was no further discussion. They simply voted the boycott out of hand. Various people, like P.S. O'Hegarty, have since expressed astonishment that Griffith should have agreed to such a pioneer act of partition. The truth is that, although Griffith was in many respects a very farseeing man, he was as completely ignorant of Northern conditions as the ordinary average Southerner who has never spent any time in the north-eastern area.

Mr. de Valera came back from America some time about Christmas 1920. I was at the time living in Casimir Avenue, Harolds Cross, and a messenger came to me on, I think, a Sunday morning telling me that de Valera was home, that he was interviewing all the Ministers, and asking me to go to McGilligan's in Leeson St. I went there immediately and, after a short time, Joe O'Reilly asked me to go to Dr. Farnan's house in Merrion Square at a particular hour, 11 or 12 o'clock. When I arrived, Michael Collins was leaving the room, having apparently just had his interview with de Valera. As I was leaving at the end of an hour, Desmond Fitzgerald arrived. I was, therefore, with Mr. de Valera exactly an hour. He asked

me to tell him precisely what I thought he ought to know about the situation at home. I do not remember many of the details of our conversation except insofar as it dealt with the ending of the struggle which was then in progress. I told him that it was a question of holding out until terms could be got from the British. It was clear to me that a compromise was essential. and I said to Mr. de Valera that I thought there was not a shade of a shadow of a chance of our getting a Republic. I understood him to agree with the substance of my remarks. I was quite positive from that time on that Mr. de Valera was no doctrinaire republican, and I paid little attention to the uncompromising note which he sometimes inserted in speeches and writtem documents. Indeed, I noticed on various occasions that what seemed at first glance to be an uncompromising statement often was qualified by a phrase which would enable him later on to recede from the position which he had appeared to take up.

I gathered that whatever reports had reached Mr. de Valera about the position at home had shaken him considerably. One thing he had done before leaving America was to purchase a cargo of flour, which was shipped to Cork for distribution amongst the people. Apparently Mr. de Valera had swallowed some sort of story about danger of starvation. Fortunately, the flour had been consigned to my Department under the pseudonym "The Irish Overseas Shipping and Trading Co., Ltd.". I got the bills of lading from the bank. No publicity was given to the idea that the flour was to be distributed, otherwise there would have been an angry howl from those who would have expected free gifts of it. I sent Mr. Frank Meagher of my Department to Cork with the bills of lading. He succeeded in selling the flour to local bakers and merchants, and the price was lodged in the Dáil Account, so that what might have been a fairly considerable loss was kept down to a few hundred pounds.

Within a few days of Mr. de Valera's arrival, a meeting of the Dáil was summoned in Alderman Cole's house in Mountjoy Square. Whatever information Mr. de Valera may have received from sources in America or at home, he appears to have been convinced that there was a great danger in the Dáil meetings, that the British were likely to get information and arrest everybody. Consequently on the first day on which the Dáil assembled several Ministers were absent. The members of the Dáil from the country took a poor view of this, refused to go on with the business laid before them and adjourned until the next day. By the time the adjourned meeting assembled, matters had got into perspective and all members of the Ministry were present.

Mr. de Valera made a long speech which showed evidence that wrong information had reached America. He seemed to deputies to hold the view that the pace had become too hot and that the Volunteers would not be able to stand up for any considerable length of time to the attacks which were being made upon them. At any rate, members of the Dáil freely expressed the view that he was trying to "slow down the war". He did not exactly propose that, but he suggested that there should be very much fewer engagements and that efforts should be made to employ larger numbers on such engagements as might take place. Of course that view had no relation to realities. To have attempted to employ larger numbers would have been playing into the hands of the British, while any change in policy which gave the impression throughout the country that the war was being slowed down would only have had the effect of undermining the confidence of the general public. After Collins and others had spoken, Mr. de Valera withdrew his suggestion.

Roger Sweetman then made a speech which certainly required considerable moral courage because his remarks were received by some deputies with jeers and even open expressions of contempt. Roger Sweetman put forward the case that the fight was hopeless, that its prolongation would only lead to unnecessary destruction

and bloodshed and to much greater demoralisation of the people than would occur if the fight were abandoned before the Volunteers were beaten to the ground. He, therefore, proposed that hostilities cease. He got no seconder for his motion, and one or two rather insulting speeches were made. Some members of the Dáil, however, treated his proposal as it ought to have been treated, seriously and courteously, and pointed out how mistaken his views were. A day or two afterwards Mr. Sweetman resigned from the Dáil.

I cannot remember if there were many meetings of the Dáil after that. Things were becoming hotter, and it was obviously becoming more dangerous to bring forty, fifty or sixty deputies from different parts of the country and have them spend several hours together in one house in Dublin.

Meetings of the Cabinet, however, were held weekly. I think the first one held after Mr. de Valera's arrival was in Madame O'Rahilly's house in Herbert Park.

For some time previously Mr. W.T. Cosgrave, who was Minister for Local Government, had ceased to attend in his office lest he should lead the police to it. Having been for a considerable time in public life in Dublin as a member of the Corporation, and having been brought up in the city, he was known personally to perhaps one hundred times as many people as any of the rest of us. Not only had he not gone to his office, but he had missed a number of Cabinet meetings. He, however, came to the first Cabinet meeting after Mr. de Valera's return, and I remember that when he entered the room all of us thought for a moment that a stranger had thrust his way in. His hair and moustache were dyed black or dark brown, and his appearance was therefore very substantially altered, certainly sufficiently to make it easy for him to go through the city without being in any more danger of leading the police than any other member. In his disguise he attended all the Cabinet

meetings from that time on to the Truce. Kevin O'Higgins also attended. Incidentally, I may remark that that was the only meeting of any sort during the whole period at which I saw Collins under the influence of drink. He undoubtedly had had too many that night and wasted a good deal of time of the meeting arguing about points of no importance. I remember Austin Stack looking at him with what seemed to me undisguised hostility. I had not realised before that there was bad blood between the two.

One of the few other Cabinet meetings about which I can remember anything definite was the one held on the evening on which the Custom House was burned. Actually, practically no business was done because Collins arrived very late in a state of considerable excitement and jubilation, but he almost immediately insisted that people had been there long enough and that we must disperse.

On another occasion at a meeting in Mrs. Humphreys' house in Ailesbury Road, some difference arose between Joseph McDonagh and myself with reference to the enforcement of orders for the boycott of British goods, the orders being issued by me and the enforcement handled by the Belfast Boycott Committee, for which Joe McDonagh was responsible. Mr. de Valera asked us to remain on after the others had gone and to discuss the matter with him. In the course of a few minutes conversation between the three of us a decision was come to and we were about to go when tea was sent in by Mrs. Humphreys. As it was actually put before us we decided that we should sit down and take it. During tea we had a general conversation about the prospects for the country in the future. On that occasion Mr. de Valera said that he held strongly that we would get the best settlement from the Coalition Government then in power in Great Britain and that we must endeavour to negotiate and agree with them before they went out of office. I did feel at the time that Joe McDonagh

took a more doctrinaire republican attitude than I was inclined to take, but neither of us could have been in any doubt as to Mr. de Valera's attitude at the time. He certainly did not think it was a case of going down fighting unless we could get recognition of the republic and complete abandonment of all British claims.

Mr. de Valera, at different Cabinet meetings, gave some account of his activities in America, of his differences with John Devoy and the Clan na Gael, and of the split which developed in the movement there. At one meeting - I think the first - namely, that in Madame O'Rahilly's house, he made a proposal that Collins should go to America. Collins was rather truculent about the matter and turned down the suggestion that he should go. Joe McDonagh, speaking to me afterwards, talked as if he regarded the proposal as an attempt by Mr. de Valera to get Collins out of the country so that the fight might be slowed down. I thought that suggestion was fantastic. However, the idea was not pursued.

At various meetings Mr. de Valera returned in one form or another to his experiences in America. On one occasion he talked about putting up in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in the suite that had once been occupied by the Prince of Wales. Collins cut in by saying very brusquely that if he had been in America money would not have been wasted as it had been wasted by Mr. de Valera. In general, although very little was said, Collins showed a certain shortness and impatience with Mr. de Valera's talk about America. I distinctly remember him pulling up Mr. de Valera once to say that he had already told a particular thing two or three times.

Before Mr. de Valera's return from America Griffith had been arrested along with Eoin MacNeill and others. Archbishop Clune arrived with a message from Lloyd George, and he was admitted to see Griffith and MacNeill in Mountjoy Prison. They suggested that he go to Miss Gavan Duffy's school in 70 Stephen's Green

and that she would put him in touch with others. When he arrived at the school Miss Gavan Duffy sent a message to me. I talked to the Archbishop for some time, but said that I could not find Collins. I was sure, however, that Desmond Fitzgerald knew his whereabouts and could get him quickly. As Desmond was at that time having a meeting with a delegation of the British Labour Party in the Shelbourne Hotel, I asked Miss Gavan Duffy to go across the square and ask him to come at once to meet the Archbishop. A most singular coincidence resulted. Miss Gavan Duffy went to the hotel and was told that Desmond was upstairs meeting the Labour people. She knocked at the door and was told to come in. She entered, and, seeing Desmond, made a sign to him. He came across, and after a couple of moments whispering with her, turned to the Labour people and asked them to excuse him for a few minutes. He went out with Miss Gavan Duffy and, within five minutes, a raiding party of Auxiliaries had entered the Shelbourne Hotel. The English Labour people were highly impressed with the efficiency of our Intelligence service. Desmond, of course, did not enlighten them as to the reason he had left at the opportune moment.

Desmond and I had half an hour's talk with Archbishop Clune who did not impress me as a very able man. Desmond then told him of some place, the whereabouts of which I have forgotten, at which he could meet Collins, and I did not see him again.

We had a Cabinet meeting after that in the house of a Mr. Geraghty, a friend of Diarmuid O'Hegarty's, in Drumcondra, not far from the canal. Collins gave an account of his talk with the Archbishop and of the latter's proposals, but all agreed that no serious notice need be taken of the matter.. Cathal Brugha and Collins had some differences of opinion over the talk with Archbishop Clune and snarled a little at each other.

Cathal Brugha and Collins never seemed to hit it off. Cathal Brugha was always very sarcastic with Collins when they

disagreed, and Collins was distinctly rough in talking to Brugha.

Cathal Brugha at one stage wanted volunteers for special work in England. We gathered that he was prepared to lead a detachment in a desperate enterprise. He said that all who went on the expedition would fall, but that the country would be right after it. He had, I understand, some scheme in mind for the assassination of the British Cabinet, or for machine-gunning members of the House of Commons in their seats. Collins was opposed to all these schemes. There were others more fantastic still which we understood to include one for machine-gunning the audiences in British picturehouses. Still others were schemes for terrorising the British public by various forms of arson and sabotage. I may say that although these schemes were never discussed at the Cabinet meetings, but only adverted to obscurely and indirectly and seemed to have been the subject of earlier disputes at, perhaps, Volunteer Head-quarters, I regarded them as absolute lunacy, and sympathised entirely with Collins in the sarcastic exchanges which took place between himself and Brugha.

Cathal Brugha, in my opinion, was a man of very limited intelligence. I should say that there was hardly another man in the whole Cabinet who had not easily twice as much brains as he had. On the other hand, he appeared to have unlimited physical courage, and he was very determined or obstinate in whatever line he had taken up. There was a sort of respect for him because of his heroism in Easter Week, but, mixed with that, was something like contempt for the naiveté of his views. His only real "yes-man" amongst the Ministers was "Sceilg" - J.J. O'Kelly.

Liam Mellows, who after the Truce was close to Cathal Brugha because of their joint opposition to the Treaty, always complained of Cathal to me any time I met him. He complained of Cathal's rigidity, of his stinginess with official funds, and of his crankiness, and gave me the impression that he found

him a most difficult man to work with.

As we got on towards the summer of 1921, the British were obviously more closely on the trail of the Ministry, and particularly of Collins, than before. Although various spies were detected and shot, it looked as if information must somehow be reaching the British Government. On one occasion British forces went into Miss Hoey's house in Mespil Road and were going to wait there to catch whoever might go in during the morning. Miss Hoey succeeded in thwarting their plan by throwing her shoe and breaking the window with it. Incidentally, quite a number of Cabinet meetings were held in Miss Hoey's house. The very first one which Countess Markievicz attended in disguise was there. When she came in dressed to look like an old charwoman, we were greatly amused.

On one occasion, when the British were waiting at one of Collins's offices - whether it was Miss Hoey's house or another in the neighbourhood, I do not know - until he would go in the morning, news that they were there was conveyed to McCluskey, porter of the Land Bank in Leeson St. He ran across to McGilligan's where there were five or six members of the family ready mobilised as it were. They all went out on various streets round the place so as to intercept Collins. Ginger O'Connell, I think, was the person who actually prevented Collins walking into the trap. His office in Henry Street was raided on one occasion. Ultimately, de Valera himself was arrested, but was released because by then the British had decided on negotiations. The story of how the negotiations were brought about has often been told.

When the Six Counties Parliament was about to be opened the British Cabinet prepared a "war to the hilt" speech for King George to deliver as the speech from the Throne. King George had other views about the matter, and, as General Smuts was then on a visit to England, he sent for him. He told

Smuts that he disagreed with the speech prepared by the Ministers. Smuts, who related the story to Desmond Fitzgerald, told King George that he quite agreed with him. George then asked Smuts to prepare another speech, which Smuts did. A few days afterwards evidences of Government excitement manifested themselves, and Smuts, who had been a member of the British War Cabinet, was summoned to a meeting of Ministers in Downing Street, where he was told that an unprecedented constitutional crisis had arisen. The King, it was said, had not only refused to deliver the speech prepared by the Government, but had produced his own draft. Smuts, pretending to know nothing, asked to see the King's draft. It was given to him and he made a pretence of reading it carefully over twice. Then he said he thought it was quite a good speech and that the Government might do worse than accept it. Ultimately the Government did accept Smuts' speech, with a few alterations,, and it was duly delivered by King George in Belfast. As it, in fact, called for negotiations, the British took steps by the sending over of Lord Derby, and other measures, to initiate them.

Once, when I had business in London, I mentioned the question of Smuts' intervention to Churchill. He did not positively confirm it, but he left me under no doubt that the story was true, saying that an unprecedented thing had occurred in connection with.

I published the story once in the Fine Gael organ "The Star" or United Ireland. It was widely quoted in British papers, and some press men cabled Smuts to South Africa asking him to confirm it. He confirmed it obliquely by saying that the story was still more extraordinary.

The Cabinet meeting which had to consider whether or not the proposal for a Truce should be accepted was, I believe, held in either Tom Montgomery's house, Shrewsbury Road, or Madame O'Rahilly's house in Herbert Park. Cathal Brugha

expressed a certain amount of reluctance about accepting the idea of a Truce or Cease Fire. I remember his saying that the country had been brought up to a high pitch of resolution and that if the fighting were stopped it might not be easy to get things going again. "Sceilg" agreed with Cathal Brugha in the view that a Truce would be psychologically dangerous. There were some smiles of amusement when "Sceilg" took up an extreme attitude. He was not highly esteemed amongst his colleagues. As the discussion proceeded, however, Cathal Brugha did not insist too strongly on his viewpoint, and agreement to the principle of a Truce was obtained without any real difficulty. The truth was that at that time when Collins and de Valera were in agreement on any point, there was practically no possibility that the majority of the Cabinet would go against them.

I should mention, by the way, that round about that time a vacancy occurred in the Chancellorship of the National Universit Professor Tim Corcoran initiated the idea of strengthening the National movement by having Mr. de Valera elected Chancellor. Mr. de Valera was obviously in favour of the plan, but when it was discussed at a Cabinet meeting he manifested a great deal of coyness and proceeded to argue that somebody who had devoted himself to academic affairs would be more suitable; also that perhaps an active politician might not serve the interests of the University best. The result of his attitude was that he, who actually wanted to be Chancellor, was arguing against the proposal, while the rest of us, who fundamentally did not care a damn, were urging him to accept the post. Ultimately, Collins asked de Valera to cut the cackle and not keep us there all night.

Finally, after the Cabinet had accepted the principle of a Truce and after Mr. de Valera had summoned representatives of the Southern Unionists and others to meet him, and had had an interview with Sir Neville Macready, who commanded the

British forces, the Truce was agreed upon. The development was received with joy throughout the country. I remember that in the lane at the back of the house where I lived a couple of huge bonfires were lit and the people remained around them half the night, dancing and singing.

The long correspondence which ensued between Mr. de Valera and Lloyd George, before negotiations really began, delayed a decision so much and produced such a change in feeling at home that the danger of ultimate civil war began to be manifest. I remember within two months of the beginning of the Truce meeting a University professor, who was a Sinn Féiner but not active in politics - the late Professor J.J. Nolan - who had paid a visit to West Cork. He told me that there was such an attitude amongst certain sections of the Volunteers, and particularly amongst the truce leaders / who were in some places behaving like an army of occupation in a foreign country, that he felt certain that peace with the British was bound to be followed by a new struggle amongst ourselves.

Before the Dáil met to discuss the appointment of plenipotentiaries I spent most of an evening arguing with Miss Mary MacSwiney, who had recently returned from an American lecturing tour. She was stopping in the Shelbourne Hotel and came across Stephen's Green to Miss Gavan Duffy's house where I called in. Miss MacSwiney asked me about the prospects of a recognition of the republic by the British. I told her that in my opinion the prospect was nil. She brought out the theoretical argument that nobody had a right to abandon nor disestablish the existing republic. The next day in the Dáil, when the plenipotentiaries were being nominated, she made a speech in which she declared that they were being sent to England for one sole purpose - to obtain British recognition of the Irish Republic. She wound up pointing her finger directly at me and saying: "If anyone here has a contrary opinion, let

him speak now or be forever silent". I only laughed at her.

Collins was most anxious not to be a member of the delegation, and at first definitely refused to allow himself to be selected. He also proposed that de Valera should go. De Valera used a large number of arguments based on the supposed mistake which President Wilson had made when he went himself to Paris to head the American delegation at the Peace Conference which followed the 1914-18 War. The gist of de Valera's argument, though he did not put it so plainly, was that he was the custodian of the Republic and that he should not let it down till the last moment and until the last ounce that could be got from the British had been obtained. He argued, however, that in order to get the best results it was essential that Collins should go. He intimated that as Collins was looked upon by the British as the leader of the fighting men, no delegation of which he was not a member would get the highest possible British offer, that if he were absent the British would feel that they had still to deal with him and still to conciliate him, and that they would hold back something from the other plenipotentiaries. This line of argument convinced the Dáil, and practically all present intimated either by speech or by applause that they wanted Collins to go. In the last resort he consented. Griffith never made any bones about going. The other members of the delegation did not interest the Dáil as a whole. There was a slight suggestion even then that Barton and Childers were being appointed because of their Oxford accents, but there was no objection to them.

Even prior to this there was some sort of a division between de Valera and Griffith, and the genuine and, be is said, absurd hatred of Childers which Griffith entertained was also beginning to show.

A little earlier, when the Dáil Cabinet was being reconstructed on the basis of an outer Ministry and an inner Cabinet, there was a very strong difference between de Valera

and Griffith over the appointment of a Minister for Propaganda. This post had been held during the whole Black and Tan period by Desmond Fitzgerald, who had discharged the duties extremely well. In fact, he was an ideal man for the post. He had literary and intellectual tastes. He had lived for a considerable time in France and spoke French almost like a native. Above all, he had a great liking for and interest in foreigners of all sorts. When he was originally appointed in charge of propaganda he weighed up the situation very accurately and fought hard and successfully against those who wanted an expensive machine to be created, more or less like a pale miniature imitation of the machine which the British had created during the 1914-18 war.

Desmond Fitzgerald clearly grasped the fact that, as we had so little money to spend, the right course for us was to follow a line which involved little cost and which did not depend on our making payments to any foreigner for any services. Accordingly, he went to London, where he contacted the London correspondents of the leading continental newspapers, and succeeded in making friends with them and interesting them in the Irish struggle. Moreover, because he had passed his life in London and already knew a good number of English journalists, he was able to get on to good terms with a considerable number of prominent and independent British Press men. The result was that as soon as the struggle began to get sharper, and Irish events to have a considerable news value, we got for nothing all the world publicity we wanted, and got more, in fact, than we could have bought space for if we had had unlimited funds.

At home in charge of the Bulletin, Desmond exercised a useful control over some of the people who would have put out scare stories which could not have been substantiated. He was always careful to keep within the limit of truth, and the Irish Bulletin was accepted by foreign Pressmen as reliable. Of course, his policy of no expenditure and no exaggeration, despite its being so suitable to the circumstances, was disapproved of by people

who thought more of display than of effect. Frank Gallagher, who was always close to de Valera. worked under Desmond and, disliking him like nearly everybody else who worked under him, was a critic of his policy. Childers, who knew about the British machine and had certain big ideas, recommended substantial expenditure to de Valera. The result was that when the Ministry was being re-formed de Valera proposed to displace Desmond Fitzgerald and to put Erskine Childers in charge of propaganda in his stead. It was said at the time that quite an angry scene had developed between him and Griffith, and that Griffith had threatened not to remain in the Cabinet if Childers were put in charge of propaganda instead of Desmond Fitzgerald. How true this is, I do not know, as I never heard anyone say that he had it direct either from Griffith's lips or from de Valera's lips. However, it was evident before the plenipotentiaries set sail for England that close and cordial co-operation between Griffith and Childers was not to be expected.

During the negotiations I was not present at many meetings, as meetings of the whole Ministry seldom took place, all business affecting the negotiations was confined to the smaller group which was called the Cabinet. On one occasion, however, I remember that the proposal for two dominions was mentioned at a meeting of all the Ministers. The proposal was one put forward by Craig, and it had already been rejected, at least by inference, before the Dáil Ministry heard of it. It was not actually discussed at our meeting, though something made me believe that it was felt that in putting it forward Craig spoke not merely for himself, but possibly for an influential section of the British. It struck me that the proposition was an excellent one and would give us far more as a nation than if we went ahead on the basis that Partition could not be recognised. However, I did not imagine that in the existing state of opinion the proposition could be accepted unless unanimously recommended

by the Cabinet. I, therefore, did not make any remarks which would have led to the merits of the Craig proposal being argued by the Dáil Ministry. I felt, too, that after my fight against the Belfast Boycott I was not the best person to get support for such a policy. I afterwards regretted that I did not insist on a discussion, even if it resulted in a unanimous, or all but unanimous, condemnation of the two dominion idea.

As the Truce dragged along it seemed to me that all Ministers were anxious for a change from the situation which had existed up till that time. I remember meeting Art O'Connor on my way into the Mansion House for some business and he talked about the fact that we called ourselves Ministers and pretended to be Ministers, but had no real power to do anything.

When the Treaty was finally signed, it had been arranged that there should be a Dante anniversary ceremony in the Round Room that night. De Valera was to preside, and he was very late in coming. I think the audience must have waited, packed in the Round Room, for at least three-quarters of an hour before he appeared. It was quite evident from his demeanour that a serious crisis had arisen.

The terms of the Treaty were published, and next day I was at a meeting in one of the Dáil offices in Earl St. at which Madame Markievicz, Art O'Connor and Seán Etchingham were present. I was in favour of the Treaty from the moment it was signed. None of the others seemed to have definitely taken up a stand at the meeting to which I refer. I remember Madame Markievicz saying that she found nothing difficult except the Oath. She said that if it were not there she would not mind a bit about anything else in the Treaty. Art O'Connor seemed to me to be still more or less of the opinion which he had indicated a few days previously and to be prepared to overlook some things which he disliked in order to see established a normal State with control over national affairs, even if its area of jurisdiction did not cover the whole country.

Meetings began to be held immediately in preparation for the Dáil Debates on the Treaty. Dan McCarthy, who had been an old friend of Griffith and had at one time worked in the office of Griffith's paper, was appointed Whip, or assumed the office of Whip, for the pro-Treaty deputies.

I was asked to go to a meeting to discuss the Treaty with Griffith and Collins in the Mansion House. I presume it was an organising meeting which had for its purpose the linking together of the deputies who were prepared to accept the Treaty. Invitations no doubt included deputies who afterwards voted against it. I suppose the assumption was that those who would come to talk to Griffith and Collins would in the main be in favour of the Treaty and that very few who wanted to dispute points with them would turn up. I remember, however, that when I entered the room Dan McCarthy asked me in a rather tentative way what my view of the Treaty was, and when I told him that I was in favour of it he expressed a warm gratification.

Up till the Truce actually occurred my Trade Department was carried on completely under cover, first in one room, then in two rooms. After the Truce I succeeded in getting offices in Grafton St. where we had four rooms, which we treated as public offices. A telephone was installed and a brass plate was put up. Mr. L.H. Kearney, who had been our representative in Paris, was brought over and an announcement was made that people wishing to do trade with France and anxious to get information could arrange for an interview with him. He stayed for about a week, and quite a number of people came to interview him. Apart from that, we carried on normal activities with a greatly increased volume of correspondence. Actually the feeling amongst all classes was that what had been a revolutionary organisation was going to become a normal Government, and a certain number of traders and manufacturers showed a disposition to become acquainted with us. Actually we could do little or nothing for them, and indeed they expected

little or nothing from us for the time being.

During the whole of the Dáil Debate there was a great uncertainty as to how certain individuals would vote, and some of those who wanted the Treaty accepted were almost anxious to vote against it. For example, William Sears of Wexford, who was strongly in favour of the acceptance of the Treaty, said to a group in the corridor in Earlsfort Terrace that he, for one, was quite ready to vote against it if such a thing should be necessary to keep the majority small. Mr. Maloney of Tipperary, who was afterwards strongly against the Treaty, seemed at first to be somewhat inclined to waver. Various individuals were asked to try and influence others. Although I knew Andy Lavan only slightly I was told by Dan McCarthy to talk to him as often as possible, and argue with him in such a way as to help to lead him to vote for the Treaty. During the days of the debate I talked a good deal to Andy Lavan and to Dan O'Rourke, both of whom voted for the Treaty and both of whom were for a long time entirely uncertain. Rumours were continually going round of people changing their minds.

One evening during the debate, I was sitting on an almost empty bench, and Dan McCarthy came up and sat beside me. I noticed at once that he was very agitated. He had an open pen-knife in his hand and was stabbing it into the cushion of the seat as if he were wanting to cut it to pieces. I asked him what was wrong, and he told me that Dr. McCartan had asked for his name to be put down to speak against the Treaty. Up till that point it had been understood that Dr. McCartan was in favour of the Treaty, and his apparent turn-round was extremely disturbing to the Whip. Actually, McCartan's request to be put on the list of anti-Treaty speakers was a manoeuvre to make his speech more dramatic and effective. When his turn ultimately came he spoke with great vehemence, not against the Treaty, but against those who were opposing it.

Late at night on the day before the vote was taken, there

was a meeting in the Mansion House, and all of us who knew anything about the men who had not declared themselves offered our opinions as to how they would vote. Griffith and Dan McCarthy took notes and made up a tot. Griffith's final verdict was that he felt sure that if nobody ratted, the Treaty would be carried by at least a majority of one.

After the vote, and after de Valera's rejection of Collins's appeal for co-operation in carrying the Treaty into effect, meetings were held to decide what would be the next stage. It was felt that when Mr. de Valera, violent opponent of the Treaty, allowed himself to be nominated again as President, a point of great danger was reached. It was clear at once that some of those who had voted for the Treaty would be inclined to vote for the re-election of Mr. de Valera. Such people were unable to see that to put executive authority into the hands of those who were against the Treaty could only lead to confusion and disaster. Ultimately, Mr. de Valera's candidature for presidency was defeated, and the anti-Treaty deputies left the Dáil. Doctor McCartan, I remember, used the phrase that those of us who were on the pro-Treaty side must now stick together like glue.

The situation soon began to be menacing. Incidents of all sorts occurred which indicated that a civil war was steadily becoming next thing to inevitable. Griffith seemed to me to have made up his mind at a comparatively early stage that the conflict was ineluctible. Collins was much slower in coming to such a conclusion. Occasionally, when some incident occurred which made him angry, he indicated that he was prepared to fight those who were challenging the majority decision, but in a day or two he would cool off. Once when he came back after having been prevented from visiting Terry MacSwiney's grave in Cork, he appeared to be fully determined on drastic action, but within a few days he was in a different frame of mind.

Kevin O'Higgin's, though as yet he was not very influential in the Cabinet, was entirely of the opinion that civil war was coming and that we ought not to shirk it. He several times urged his views on Collins. He told me once that he had said to Collins: "If I had your ability and your prestige I would take this country by the back of the neck and box its ears".

When conflict threatened in Limerick and an attack on the forces commanded by Michael Brennan, who had got possession of the barracks, seemed imminent, Griffith made, I think, the only formal speech which I ever heard him make at a Cabinet meeting. He stood up and addressed us for practically half an hour. The burden of his remarks was that we were now a government with a government's powers and responsibilities, and that we must shrink from no action necessary to assert our authority. He said that if we failed to defend the rights of the people and to uphold their majority decision we would be looked upon in Irish history as the greatest set of poltroons who ever had the country's fate in their hands.

Personally, I was entirely with Griffith in his viewpoint, but I realised that the decision rested finally with Collins. Collins seemed very much disposed to agree with Griffith and he was not then in a temper. On the contrary he was perfectly cool, though obviously somewhat torn both ways. If he had ultimately agreed with Griffith it would not have been a case of making a promise in anger and failing to carry it out. Before, however, he had made up his mind to come down on one side or the other, Mulcahy intervened. Mulcahy apparently had a great belief in Liam Lynch and a great confidence that he understood him and could rely on him, and he put forward the proposal of handing over the Limerick barracks to Liam Lynch, who would hold them at the disposal of the Government, subject to certain considerations. Collins accepted Mulcahy's proposals. Griffith was very annoyed and disappointed at the decision, and a coolness between himself and Collins began, which did not

completely end until after the attack on the Four Courts. As a matter of fact, it continued to grow for quite a while. At the time the Pact Election was decided on Griffith was within a hair's breadth of breaking with Collins.

A lot of negotiations went on before the Pact was agreed upon by Collins and certain others on the Treaty side, and de Valera and his supporters on the other side. It was brought before a joint meeting of the Dáil Cabinet and the Republican Government for ratification. We were sitting round a table, and several people had given their votes for it before it came to Griffith's turn. Some of those who had voted for it expressed their reluctance and dislike of the arrangement, which seemed to be an attempt to take out of the hands of the general public a matter of vital importance which they alone were entitled to decide.

When Griffith was asked whether he approved or disapproved, he seemed to me to be under tremendous emotional stress. He worked nervously with his neck-tie in silence. He took off his glasses and wiped them, and I noticed that his hand was shaking so that he could hardly hold them. He put on the glasses, fiddled with his tie again; again he took off his glasses and wiped them, the whole thing occupying, it seemed to me, three or four minutes while dead silence reigned round the table. We all realised that if Griffith said no, a split, the consequences of which could hardly be foreseen, would be almost upon us. On the other hand, I think the majority of us almost wished that he would say no, in the hope that Collins would be forced to reconsider his support of the Pact. Ultimately, however, Griffith said: "I agree" and made no further comment.

It was plain to me that if any more delays or compromises took place Griffith would work no longer with Collins. As a matter of fact, I noticed on several occasions afterwards that

he had begun to refer to Collins not as "Mick" or as "Collins", but as "Mr. Collins". Griffith always "Mistered" anybody of whom he had a poor opinion. Of course it was much easier for Griffith to see that a civil war was inevitable and to wish to have it over and done with before the country rotted any further, than it was for Collins, who would be fighting his actual comrades of yesterday. Griffith was friendly with many individual Volunteers, but chiefly with those who looked upon him as a political leader and who would all be on the same side as himself in case of an internal struggle. Therefore he was not up against the prospect of actually turning guns on the men who had been his closest comrades until a month ot two before. For myself, although I agreed with Griffith's outlook all along, I saw the tremendous difficulty of Collins's position, a difficulty which would not have been so great but for the fact that he was a humane and warm-hearted man. Collins, in entering on the Pact, was undoubtedly actuated mainly, if not entirely, by a desire to get some sort of a popular verdict for the Treaty. That had been attempted earlier at the Mansion House Conference by asking de Valera to agree to what he, I think, dubbed the stone age plebiscite, namely a plebiscite which would be taken after Mass on a particular Sunday at all the churches in the country, under the supervision of the clergy and local leaders from the two sides. Collins knew that such a plebiscite would show an overwhelming majority for the Treaty and would justify any action that might have to be taken if the recalcitrant armed forces continued along the path they had been taking.

I never heard the details of the discussions in the Mansion House about the plebiscite, though I remember Griffith at a Cabinet meeting shortly afterwards saying: "That was the first time I ever got after de Valera properly".

Up till that time Griffith had had little feeling of bitterness towards de Valera, though he was very bitter towards Erskine Childers and even Cathal Brugha.

The plebiscite idea having been rejected, Collins felt that even under the Pact a test of popular opinion could be obtained, because sufficient Independents were sure to go up to have voting take place in at least part of the country and to give an opportunity to the voters in the areas affected to show how their sympathies lay. The anti-Treaty people on the other hand wanted to use the Pact to prevent any candidates but those agreed on between the two wings of Sinn Féiners from going forward, the idea being to silence the ordinary voters of the country. Before nomination day Collins spoke out in such a way as to encourage the nomination of Independent candidates. He was accused of some breach of faith in this, but I feel certain from anything I ever heard him say that he never gave any indication, let alone a promise, that he would be a party to preventing voting taking place by helping to ensure that only as many candidates would be proposed as there were seats.

During all the time between the Treaty and the general election incidents of the most exasperating and damaging character were taking place. There had to be negotiations of all sorts with the British about handing over of authority by them, and later about the Constitution. There was never a delicate moment when news did not come from Ireland of some attack on British forces or some unjustifiable damage to property.

Meantime, efforts were being made to make a proper army out of the Volunteers. I can remember the enthusiastic crowds which watched the first small group of regular soldiers armed and in uniform marching in Dublin. I fancy there were only about forty as it came along Dame St. and through the city to Beggars Bush Barracks.

The story of the taking over of Dublin Castle has often been told. It was related to me by Kevin O'Higgins, who was actually with Collins when he went to meet the British representative there. James McMahon apparently wanted to show that he was not an ordinary impartial British official. When Collins, O'Higgins and the others arrived at the Castle in a taxi and went upstairs, McMahon was on the landing by himself to meet them and said: "You are welcome". Collins passed him by without pausing in his step, throwing over his shoulder the answer: "Like hell we are".

Kevin O'Higgins had a lot of stories to tell of Collins's replies to British officials on various matters: On one occasion some reference was made to the Viceregal Lodge, and a British Minister asked what would be done with it. Collins answered: "We will make a cancer hospital of it".

I was told by people who were present at the negotiations that Collins got on very well with Birkenhead who appreciated his blunt and sometimes brutal humour, whereas Griffith got on better with Austen Chamberlain. That, however, is all an aside.

Very soon after the election the seizure of the motor cars in Thompson's garage occurred, and Leo Henderson and another were arrested. Actually, following the election results Collins had come to be in full agreement with Griffith and had made up his mind to take action. I gathered that if a party could have been got to the spot in time he was rather anxious that the raiders should have been fired on.

When the Irregulars in the Four Courts seized Ginger O'Connell as a reprisal for the arrest of their own leaders the die was cast.

About this time a letter came from the British stating that from their point of view the position was becoming impossible, that the Government here seemed unable to assert its authority or to implement the Treaty. This letter, however,

had actually no effect in bringing about a decision to deal with the Four Courts. Apart from George Gavan Duffy who was a strange bird amongst us, all the members of the Government, with the exception of Collins and probably Mulcahy, had long been in favour of inaugurating the civil war, or, at any rate, of taking up the challenge which the anti-Treaty forces had thrown down.

Following the arrest of Ginger O'Connell, a meeting was held in Government Buildings, to which Gearoid O'Sullivan as Adjutant General and Sean McMahon as Chief of Staff were invited, and the question of attacking the Four Courts was discussed. I think that Gavan Duffy, who was one of the signatories of the Treaty who had spoken almost against it in the Dáil, was not very strongly, even at this time, in favour of taking action. He asked how long it would take to clear up the whole business. Gearoid O'Sullivan, with more optimism than was justified, indicated that in his opinion the Irregulars all over the country would be disposed of in a week or a fortnight. Gavan Duffy afterwards complained a good deal about that particular answer, and indicated to me that he would not have been in favour of the action taken if he had realised that the struggle was going to be so prolonged and expensive of life and property.

It was decided that an immediate request be made to the British for field guns to fire on the Four Courts, as it would be impossible to carry out a successful attack without artillery. Collins, I remember, suggested that Ministers should not sleep at home that night in case any whisper of what was intended got out and more of them picked up as Ginger O'Connell had been. In pursuance of that suggestion I myself went that night to Professor John Nolan's house in Bushy Park Road. Some time in the course of the morning, about 3 or 4 o'clock, I was awakened by the sound of the field guns firing. A few minutes afterwards a motor car came along the road at great speed and could be heard stopping at Erskine Childers' house which was a little

distance away. After an interval of something like a quarter of an hour, what seemed to be the same car came hurrying back, apparently taking Childers to whatever consultation was being arranged. Obviously no serious leakage in regard to the intended attack occurred. When I went down town in the morning I saw soldiers at barricades at a couple of places on the way.

Later in the morning, Collins came in to Government Buildings and it was arranged that Ministers and certain Civil Servants would live in for the present. I camped with George Gavan Duffy in J.J. Walsh's room during that night and the first part of the civil war. Three mattresses were sent in which we laid on the floor at night and which we rolled up, together with the bedclothes, and piled in a corner of the room during the day. Desmond Fitzgerald also came to camp in that room for some time.

The Four Courts fighting dragged on for a week, and all the indications from the country made it clear that the fighting was going to be fairly prolonged.

Very shortly after the surrender of the Four Courts it became obvious that George Gavan Duffy might become a thorn in our side, He began to talk about prisoner-of-war treatment for the captured irregulars, and generally to take up a very finicky legal attitude about everything discussed.

Frequent Cabinet meetings were held, and actually there were three or four beds put into the Cabinet room, in one of which Arthur Griffith slept.

A day or two after the fighting began, Padraig Ó Máille arrived in Dublin, having had some difficulty in making his way to the city from the west. He was given a bed in the Cabinet room, and we used to say that he was the only non-Minister who had been present through the whole of a Cabinet meeting because, as he had not had any sleep for a couple of nights while making his way to Dublin, he slept solidly in his bed

throughout the whole meeting.

Griffith, by this time, as a result of the tremendous strain that he had experienced during the previous six months, was, I thought, obviously failing. He had felt for a long time that Collins was going to let the situation deteriorate till it was past remedy and he was utterly appalled at the prospect. The result was that he endured tortures of anxiety. Coupled with that was the fact that he was constantly being attacked as a traitor and as a man who had surrendered national right and national principle. That was harder for Griffith to bear than perhaps anyone else. He had spent years of his life denouncing the Old Irish Party for their lack of principle and lack of courage, and when all his arguments and epithets were turned against himself they wounded him as they would not have wounded another. Griffith had got a complex about Erskine Childers whom he had never liked, and whom he now regarded as practically as the arch-agent of the British, though he did not exactly say so, and as a man who was knowingly out to destroy the country. I remember when Collins asked him to write a proclamation to encourage the troops, Griffith prepared something which contained in two or three separate paragraphs references to Childers. I knew of the matter because Collins threw the document to me and asked me to re-write it. During the following few weeks Collins asked me to write a number of things, and told me not to bother showing them to Griffith. Ultimately Griffith's state of health became such that he was directed to go into Vincent's Hospital, where, after a very short time, he died suddenly.

Collins, while acting as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, frequently attended Government meetings, though on many occasions he was absent and Griffith and, on some occasions, Cosgrave presided.

Very soon after the start of the Civil War, Michael Comyn proceeded to bring an action before the Dáil Courts for a writ of prohibition directing the Government to cease operations. Judge Crowley, who heard the application, took the usual course of directing that notice should be served on the Government and requiring it to show cause why the writ applied for should not issue. The matter was considered by various Ministers informally and the view that was arrived at was that as the Dáil High Court had been established by Government decree the thing to do now was simply to issue a new Government decree abolishing it. Gavan Duffy, who, as I have already said, was uneasy about the whole campaign, protested against this treatment of a High Court. He was, however, overruled by the rest of the Cabinet. It had become plain, even before that point, that he was not likely to remain long with us. J.J. Walsh, in whose room Gavan Duffy slept, used to make a great deal of fun of him. One Sunday, immediately after the O'Connell St. operations, J.J. and I were going out for the day. Gavan Duffy said he would go out with us. J.J. very portentously advised him not to go, saying that after all he and I had done nothing but, as members of the Government, to authorise the operations then in progress, whereas Gavan Duffy had, in addition, signed the Treaty, so that while we might be allowed to pass through the city without being fired at, no one on the other side could see Gavan Duffy without boiling up in a rage and pressing a trigger. Gavan Duffy laughed at these jokes of J.J., but I think they only had the effect of making him less inclined to stay with the Government. He very shortly began to be more persistent in his agitation about the treatment to be accorded to the prisoners taken in the Four Courts and elsewhere. He looked up the conditions required by the Geneva Convention to be accorded to prisoners-of-war, and asked that the Government should forthwith declare that all prisoners taken by us would receive prisoner-of-war treatment. The rest of the Cabinet, although no drastic measures were then in contemplation, took the view that we, having been appointed as Government by a

majority vote, the people struggling against us were rebels and were not entitled to the treatment laid down for prisoners taken in an international struggle.

Gavan Duffy's ire with the Government became greater. He remained for some time, but with tension between him and other Ministers constantly growing. Griffith habitually referred to him as "Mr. Duffy", showing that he could hardly stand him, and answered him very gruffly when speaking to him at Cabinet meetings.

As an illustration of the attitude towards Gavan Duffy, I may mention that at one meeting at which Mr. Cosgrave was presiding because Griffith was ill, we had some item down for discussion in regard to which we knew that Gavan Duffy would disagree with the rest of us, and it happened that he had not appeared when the meeting commenced. Certain Ministers were inclined to talk at some length about the matter, and Cosgrave interrupted saying: "For heaven's sake let us get this settled before 'sore toes' comes down"

Ultimately Gavan Duffy left us, and the situation was better both for those who remained and no doubt for himself. I remember about this time he told me definitely that he would never have agreed to the attack on the Four Courts if he had known the struggle would be prolonged. He recalled that Gearoid O'Sullivan had said that it would be over in a week, and proceeded to argue that it was obvious that members of headquarters staff had really known nothing about the state of affairs in the country, or such a prediction would not have been made.

Shortly after the Four Courts fighting a large number of prisoners were lodged in Portobello Barracks and a big escape took place, obviously with the connivance of some members of the army. Collins was very much put out about it. I never, I think,

saw him so angry and disturbed, and when somebody talked about the army he said: "We have no army; we have only an armed mob". He went on to say that he feared it would be impossible for us to keep prisoners anywhere.

It was at this juncture and under the influence of the fears expressed by Collins about the keeping of any prisoners that a dispatch was sent to the British asking for the loan of St. Helena. The British did not refuse, but sent back a temporising dispatch pointing out the difficulty of transporting prisoners so far and the possibility of difficulties with the local inhabitants. Actually, before the reply came, we had begun to reconsider the matter ourselves and decided, in view of the complete indiscipline of our army at the time, that if we, with British consent, dispatched troops to St. Helena to guard prisoners there, they would probably mutiny, release the prisoners and disgrace us entirely. The result was that, without putting the British to the point of refusal, the St. Helena proposal was allowed to fade out.

Another proposal which was made at the time was that we should take over Lambay Island. The Board of Works made a strenuous fight against that proposal. They pointed out first that there were very fine buildings and gardens on the island which would be destroyed if we planted a prisoner camp there, and that very heavy compensation would have to be paid. They also indicated the great delay which would be involved in the erection of hutments, etc. on Lambay as compared with the time in which they could be erected on the mainland. They finally pointed out that the water supply on Lambay was very small and that if we interned thousands of prisoners there it would be necessary to send a water-ship regularly to the island to fill tanks. By conjuring up all these difficulties, the Board of

Works finally drove us off the idea of sending prisoners to Lambay. In any case, we were beginning to recover our nerve and to feel confident that discipline could be established in the army and that the task of holding the prisoners in ordinary camps would not be too difficult.

Of course, in the early days, indiscipline was not confined to the army. It was even worse in the Civic Guards. Duggan was the Minister for External Affairs but he never mentioned to the Cabinet that trouble was brewing in the Civic Guards. I gather that he had told something to Collins, but whether he gave him enough information to let Collins have a true picture of the situation, I do not know. At any rate, as far as the rest of us were concerned, we knew practically nothing of what was going on. We had heard that certain of the Civic Guards, perhaps led by Paddy Brennan, were objecting to the employment of ex-R.I.C. men as instructors and prospective officers. We thought that it was one of those disputes which would settle itself as similar causes of agitation had settled themselves elsewhere. Then, suddenly, we were told that the bulk of the Civic Guard had mutinied and that they had chased certain of the higher officers, including Michael Staines who was Commissioner, Joe Ring and others, out of the camp.

According to the report that reached the Government, Staines behaved with singular ineptitude. It was stated that on parade he had referred to the rumours of insubordination, had pointed the duty of the Guards to obey their officers and the Government, and then had asked those who were not prepared to act as he had indicated to step forward two paces. Pendemonium broke loose and, as stated, Staines and the officers who were with him were driven out of the camp. Staines then called for military aid, and armoured cars were sent down, but the military officer had the

sense to refuse to take any action when he saw that if he did so, he would be up against a real fight with the Civic Guards.

All Ministers took the view that when Duggan and Staines knew that the situation was really threatening, they should have given a full report to the Government. All of us agreed that if Staines feared a mutiny the right course would have been to bring the armoured cars into the camp before he made any attempt to separate the sheep from the goats, and not to send for them after the mutiny had broken out. Duggan was so cut up about the whole business that he simply disappeared down to Greystones. This was before the start of the Civil War.

I came in some contact with the Guards immediately afterwards and during the Civil War but prior to Collins's death. I was asked by Mr. Cosgrave to go up to Home Affairs and preside there as Acting Minister in Duggan's absence. I established fairly good relations with Paddy Brennan, whose brother Michael was a close friend of mine, and arranged with Paddy that the Guards should undertake certain military patrol duties in the neighbourhood of their camp in co-operation with the appropriate army authority. Some of them were brought to town about the start of the Civil War and were put in occupation of Oriel House.

I remember that the night after the fighting in O'Connell Street ceased Michael Hayes and I went to Miss Gavan Duffy's house, 70 Stephen's Green. After we had been there for some time a great deal of firing was heard, not like the ordinary odd sniper's shots. Not knowing what was happening we decided to go home. The shooting was obviously in the neighbourhood of Merrion Square. We turned off the Green into Hume Street, and when we got to

the corner of Ely Place to turn down towards Merrion Square we could hear terrific volleys. We were hesitating a little, when a man came round from Merrion Square direction and said "It's all overhead". We went down to Government Buildings, rang the bell and a soldier admitted us. We spoke to the soldier about the shooting and he said "Oh, it's nothing. It's them Civic Guards. They were paid last night".

Similar indications of lack of discipline on the part of members of the armed forces were coming to light constantly. I think it was the next morning or afternoon that I was going into Government Buildings, after having been out for a short period. When I went up the steps and through the door I saw that the sentry who should have been there was absent, but his rifle by itself was there leaning against the wall, apparently as his substitute. I waited, and in three or four minutes the soldier emerged from the lavatory at the other end of the corridor, lifted his rifle and was on duty again.

A little later, however, we noticed that the guards on Government Buildings were becoming very much more soldier-like. The first Company we noticed doing their duty properly were a group whom we heard described as Scottish-Irish. They were under an officer with a Glasgow accent.

Griffith's death took us all by surprise because, although we saw the effects of the war on him, few of us had realised the state he was in. We were all very sorry about his death and recognised the magnitude of his service to the nation, but we had come to feel that he had played his part and that, even if he survived the civil war, he would not be much use in the Dáil when it met.

Of course, he had not quite lost his old fire. Shortly before he died, there was some talk about the summoning of the Dáil and about the attitude that various Independents would take. Mention was made of Professor Maguinness, and Griffith immediately spoke of him in terms of contempt, almost like those used by Kevin O'Higgins afterwards, saying that if ever a chance arose to stab us in the back Maguinness would be the man to do it.

There was some uproar amongst the prisoners in Mountjoy a few days after the Four Courts surrender and the guards were reported to have fired on them. A note arrived in to a Cabinet meeting from Maude Gonne, asking Griffith to go out and speak to her. Griffith refused to go, whereupon a second note came in saying "They are firing on the prisoners in Mountjoy. They are firing on the son of your old friend Seán MacBride". Griffith turned the note over and wrote on the other side of it, "If your son behaves himself he will be in no danger", and sent it out to her. Up till that time, or till a few days before it, Madame MacBride had been pro-Treaty; she was amongst the most violent of the anti-Treaty people afterwards.

Another little incident comes to my mind with reference to Griffith. He had been very annoyed at what he thought was some weak statement by the then Bishop MacRory of Down and Connor. One day, again when we were at a Cabinet meeting, a message came in saying that Bishop MacRory wanted to speak to Griffith. Griffith at first said that he would not go out. The rest of us said, however, that he could not treat a bishop that way and that he must see him and hear what he had to say. Griffith left the room in such a bad humour that Cosgrave asked Michael Hayes to follow him out and watch the inter-

view between himself and the bishop. Michael Hayes' account of the interview was that Griffith met the bishop and said "Good day", but did not kiss his ring, standing very stiff and hostile before him. The bishop then stated that Lloyd George had sent for him and asked him to go to London to talk about the situation in Belfast. Griffith said "You should go". Then the bishop asked "What am I to tell him?". Griffith replied in his most cutting style, "Tell him what you think yourself, if you think anything". Hayes then tried to bring the conversation to an amicable end.

Despite these indications of force and irascibility Griffith was really spent.

Collins was killed only some ten days after Griffith's funeral. I had gone home that night to my own house in Casimir Avenue, because the Civil War apparently was fading out. My house was situated in a cul-de-sac and was the last house at the blind end. Some time early in the morning the sound of lorries was heard coming down to our door. My wife was awakened by the noise and ran to the window in a state of some trepidation. Then in a minute or two she said, "It's alright. They are Free State soldiers". Immediately she said that, I replied, "Collins must have been killed", because it struck me that I would not be sent for in the middle of the night for any less reason.

When I went downstairs Commandant Marie was in the sitting-room, and Michael Hayes, who had already been collected, was with him. He told me that Collins was dead and that a Cabinet meeting was being held to appoint a new Commander-in-Chief.

As soon as I got my clothes on I went with Commandant Marie and Michael Hayes to Government Buildings.

Within another half hour or so the remaining Ministers were all gathered in. I never in my life saw a more dejected looking group. What we had to do was, however, obvious. General Mulcahy was the only man who could be appointed to succeed Collins, and that was duly done by a unanimous vote. Then it was decided that a proclamation must be issued, and several of us, including Hugh Kennedy, the Attorney General, sat at various tables trying to write something suitable. Actually, the document produced by Mulcahy himself was accepted and I think was quite good.

Curiously enough, Collins's death had, amongst some sections of the army at any rate, a tremendous effect. Paddy Hogan told me that going downstairs a day or so afterwards he heard a lot of noise in the room occupied by the Government Building guards. He went in and found a few of the soldiers giving a terrific hammering to another fellow. On enquiring the cause, Paddy Hogan found that there had been a collection for a wreath for Collins and that this fellow had refused to subscribe and had made some disparaging remark, whereupon the others gave him the best beating he ever had in his life.

All members of the Government went down to the North Wall the night after the news came to meet Collins's body, which was being brought by boat from Cork. It was, I think, two or three o'clock in the morning before the ship arrived. Various people told me they never saw anything more moving or impressive than the sight of the procession when it reached Stephen's Green in the dark grey morning, the coffin on a gun-carriage, a piper in front and a small straggling crowd of two or three hundred people after it. Collins's body was laid that night in the mortuary chapel in Vincent's Hospital. I think his death had definitely a hardening effect on opinion everywhere, not only, as I indicated, amongst particular groups of soldiers, but also

amongst the general public. Moreover, we felt that in certain respects Mulcahy was less sentimental about old comrades than Collins had been and, as we in the Government saw it, there was greater determination than before to complete the work and definitely establish the authority of the elected Government.

Ultimately the Dáil was allowed to meet, having been prorogued a number of times by Government order. There was a good deal of discussion in the Cabinet about who would be Speaker. It was agreed that it had to be somebody who knew Irish fairly well, and at one stage I was afraid that I would be conscripted for the post, for which I knew I would not be well fitted. Ultimately, however, the choice fell on Michael Hayes.

On Collins's death Kevin O'Higgins, who had been serving in the Army in the uniform of, I think, a Commandant or Colonel-Commandant, came back to the Government and became Minister for Home Affairs.

At the meeting of the pro-Treaty party held on the evening before the Dáil assembled, the question of who should be President in succession to Collins was debated. Cosgrave had acted as Chairman of meetings of the Government in the absence of Collins and Griffith, but he was not in any sense regarded as having a right of succession. Kevin O'Higgins, it is curious to remember in view of his subsequent history, rose at the opening of the debate and proposed that Richard Mulcahy be next President. I spoke immediately after and said that it had been alright to have Collins as President, but that it would now be much better to have a civilian, that the effect upon the country and on the relations between the Army and the Government would be much better if the President were not in uniform. I think it was Pádraig Ó Máille who then arose and proposed Cosgrave. Mulcahy withdrew from nomination and

Cosgrave, as far as I can remember, was unanimously selected.

When the Dáil met nobody opposed to the Treaty attended except Lawrence Ginnell. There had been some talk as to what should be done if anti-Treaty deputies who had participated in the armed rebellion against the Government should attend, and it had been agreed that they would be arrested, just as they would be if found in any other circumstances. Ginnell, however, was not a man who could be arrested, as he had not taken part in any armed operations. Deputies were asked to sign the roll, and Ginnell refused. He tried to address the assembly without having enrolled and was apparently going to discuss one of the theoretical points about which propaganda could be made. As he refused to desist when called on by the Speaker, the latter directed that he be removed and Tom Byrne, who was Captain of the Guard, and some of the ushers took him out of his seat and led him out of the chamber. The incident only occupied a minute or two and although it was regarded as a sensation, it relieved us of a man who, during the critical times that were to follow, might have been very much of a thorn in our flesh. Ginnell later was very annoyed with himself for having gone to the length of getting himself expelled. He said frankly to various people that he had made a mess of the situation.

At the time of Michael Comyn's application to the Dáil Courts for an order preventing the Government carrying on the Civil War, somebody found in the Castle an application in his own handwriting made by Comyn some years previously to the British Chief Secretary for a judicial appointment. The letter wound up with expressions of loyalty, and concluded by saying "I may add that I have had the honour of being presented to His Majesty the King". There was talk of publishing a facsimile of the document but, through people's interest in other matters being greater, it was not done. Some years afterwards a search was made for the letter, but

it was not to be found. I, however, had seen it myself and had had an opportunity of comparing it with written documents which Comyn lodged with the Dáil Éireann Supreme Court.

There was, of course, division of political opinion throughout the Civil Service. Care was taken not to publish original drafts of the Constitution as furnished by the Constitution Committee to the Provisional Government and the Dáil Cabinet. Two of the minority reports were, of course, rejected. One of them, prepared principally by Alfred O'Rahilly, was very theoretical and unsuited to existing conditions in Ireland. The main draft was subjected to amendments in various respects, in consultation with the British. In the circumstances of the time it was agreed on all hands that a unilateral interpretation of the Treaty was impossible, and that if we were to get full possession of the country we must produce a Constitution which the British, as well as ourselves, would regard as being in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty.

I remember that in the negotiations with the British there were many sticky passages. At one time Collins wired for Mr. Cosgrave to go across with, as he said, the oil-can. Collins had considerable belief in Mr. Cosgrave's ability, by good humour and by invention of middle courses, to find a way out of difficulties in negotiation which threatened deadlock.

I forget the particular matters which caused trouble when the draft Constitution was being argued out in London. I know that in the original draft the term "Governor General" had not been used. It had been proposed to name this official "Commissioner for the British Commonwealth". The British insisted, as I think they were entitled to

insist, on our following the Canadian precedent, and that the representative of the Crown should be called "Governor General". As far as I remember the original draft also proposed to omit the Oath from the Constitution following a view put forward by George Gavan Duffy, one which I thought fairly arguable, if a little slick, that the provision in the Treaty only prevented the imposition of any Oath other than that set out in the appropriate clause. There was no provision in the original draft of the Constitution for the employment of the Governor General as an agent in the dissolution of the Dáil. The original draft would have created something like the French position, where the Parliament could only be dissolved by its own vote. The British, however, insisted again on the Canadian precedent and on having the Dáil dissolved by the Governor General on, of course, the advice of the Government. The result of the argument was a most confused clause, which at the time no one understood. It was still specified that a session of the Dáil could be brought to a close only by its own vote, and both Ministers and lawyers thought that the result of the London argument had been that the Dáil was to be dissolved by the Governor General on the advice of the Executive Council, but only after it had itself voted in favour of ending its session.

A long time afterwards, when Fianna Fáil came into the Dáil and failed to carry a vote of no confidence in the then Government as a result of the departure of Mr. Jinks, Sligo, Mr. John Costello studied the clause thoroughly and found that while a session of the Dáil could only be ended by a vote of the Dáil, the life of the assembly could be ended by the Governor General on the advice of the Government. As this opinion was a new one, and as it might, given suitable opportunity, have been made the subject of litigation, great care was taken to keep

secret the intended dissolution until it could be announced that the Governor General had signed the requisite documents. In the new Constitution the right of the Government to dissolve the Oireachtas was definitely established.

I think it worth while to record that one great benefit certainly came out of the British insistence on amending our draft Constitution so that it would agree in general with the Canadian model. If our Constitution in 1927 had been as both the drafting committee and the Dáil intended it to be, we should long ago have been suffering from the French type of Government, with Ministries going into office and being defeated and replaced every two or three months. The thing that now enables us to have reasonably stable government is the power of the Cabinet to call a General Election. We owe that entirely to British interference with the first draft of the original Free State Constitution, as no sensible amendment on the question of dissolution would have been carried against the Government in the Dáil itself.

We, of course, felt very sensitive at the time about the changes that had to be made in order to satisfy the British that our proposed Constitution was in accordance with the Treaty. Actually, the revised and approved draft was not published until the very eve of the election in the summer of 1922.

Complaints were made that the original draft was never published. It is certain, however, that members of the then Opposition had the opportunity of seeing all documents.

Like other members of the Dáil Cabinet, I was furnished with copies of the drafts and of certain comments on them. I locked them in my desk in Government Buildings,

having given some study to them. Afterwards, when the Civil War was practically over, I wanted to look at them again for some purpose and found that they were missing. The desk had not been broken, and obviously someone with a key had taken them. However, there was really nothing in them out of which much political capital could be made.

If the Civil War had not taken place, and if the Constitution had been the subject of ordinary discussions in the country, no doubt the changes made in deference to British objections would have assumed very considerable political importance.

The Dáil, having at last assembled, got to work fairly well at once. Tom Johnson, leader of the Labour party, assumed the responsibility of acting as leader of the Opposition. At the time, he often irritated us a great deal by his insistence on debating a great variety of matters at considerable length. Looking back, however, I am sure that he actually helped us very considerably. If he had not taken the line he took, but had, because of the state of emergency, acquiesced in practically everything we did, the difference between the Government and the leaders of the Irregulars would not have been so apparent. From the point of view of holding and steadying public opinion the open discussions in the Dáil put us in a different position altogether from our armed opponents. The fact that we had frequently to defend ourselves and our actions in open debate only helped to rally opinion behind us. If we had not been challenged and had not had to make our case, many arguments against us would have been believed but, because of Mr. Johnson's opposition, we were put in a position to dispose of them.

It cannot be said that the Civil War proceeded very satisfactorily. The Army undoubtedly improved in discipline

and effectiveness, and officers who were not loyal gradually were eliminated, or eliminated themselves, but a kind of rot proceeded in the country in consequence of the guerilla tactics that were being carried on. Paddy Hogan once referred very penetratingly to the change in political opinion which took place in a certain area where a good many trains had been held up and looted, and the loot distributed, in part, amongst the people of the locality. Those who took the loot, as Paddy pointed out, were not content to look upon themselves as mere robbers or receivers of stolen goods, so they threw a cloak of political principle around themselves and began to feel a strong opposition to the Treaty because that, they felt, justified them in holding on to the property which was distributed amongst them. It was largely because of the widening deterioration of public morale which the general guerilla activities produced and because of the difficulty of maintaining discipline in the Army when the Irregulars fired on and killed soldiers and then surrendered before they themselves had suffered any casualties, and also because of the feeling of desperation amongst elements of the civil population who were subjected to terrorism, that the Government ultimately decided on the policy of executing people found in illegal possession of arms.

Long before the period of executions, which ultimately proved decisive, had begun, the Government had been brought face to face with a quite unexpected difficulty in the shape of the Post Office strike. I have no doubt that the pay and conditions of the Post Office workers were unsatisfactory and that they had ample grounds for discontent. I think it is certain, however, that no strike would have taken place if the British Government had remained in power here and had refused to make concessions. The strike took place because there was a new Irish Government in power, which seemed weak and likely to yield

to extreme pressure, and because of political circumstances and of the charges of surrender and treachery which had been levelled by opponents of the Treaty against it, many workers were actually inclined to despise that Government and to look upon the strike as a means of knocking it down and walking on it. Actually, as often happens in a strike of the kind, the very difficulties of the time made it easier for the Government to face up to the results of an entire dislocation of the postal services than would otherwise have been the case.

From the moment the strike began, Joe McGrath, who had been closely associated with the Labour movement for many years, was anxious for a settlement. J.J.Walsh, who was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs was, on the other hand, very determined, and rightly determined, that the issue should be fought out to a conclusion. We used to be amused at J.J., who spent every morning doing a round of the other Ministers and gingering them up for fear that they should weaken and make a settlement which would be equivalent to a Government surrender. Actually, the whole Civil War crisis was so acute that there was no general sympathy for the Post Office strikers, and essential communications were carried on somehow, with the result that the strike ended with just a small gesture of concession by the Government.

I was appointed by Mr. Cosgrave, when the Dáil met, as Minister for Local Government, he himself taking the office of Minister for Finance. He had intended that Mr. E.P.McCarron, an official of the old Local Government Board, should be the new Secretary of the Department. He asked me to appoint him and I, having no knowledge of the personnel, was perfectly willing to accept his advice, which I had afterwards plenty of reason to know was quite sound and correct. However, the appointment of Mr.

McCarron immediately led to a threat of a crisis corresponding to that which had arisen in the Civic Guards when certain ex-R.I.C. men had been employed as officers and instructors. Local Government authorities throughout the country, under the guidance of the officials of the Dáil Local Government Department, had been fighting and defying the Local Government Board and carrying on the work of the various Councils contrary to all the instructions and wishes of the Board. In consequence, the L.G.B. was looked upon with some of the hatred with which Volunteers looked upon the headquarters staff of the R.I.C. Although we proceeded to dismiss the members of the Board, like Dr. Biggar, practically all the Dáil officials, who had been carrying on the fight, were very discontented when they learned that an official of the old Board was going to be Secretary of the Department and their official superior. A rumour reached me that the Dáil officials had had a meeting and had made up their minds to resign in a body and do their best to carry all the Councils in the country over to the anti-Treaty side. Whether everybody was present at such a meeting or not I do not know, but that some such plan was being canvassed I was certain - and it was afterwards admitted. Mr. McCarron handed me his resignation from the post of Secretary to which he had just been appointed. I refused to accept it and immediately thought out a plan of action against the prospective mutineers which proved successful. The proposed salaries in the new Department of the various officials of the old Dáil Department had been fixed but were not known to anyone apart from Mr. Cosgrave and Mr. McCarron and myself, to whom the list already prepared had been presented for ratification. I took the salary list and, having not the slightest personal knowledge of the officials concerned, proceeded to revise it. What I did was this. All the officials of a certain grade in the old Dáil Department were each to have

been given a salary of, I think, £500 per annum. I went down the list and, without altering the total amount involved and without any reference whatever to the personal circumstances or qualifications of the individuals concerned, altered their salaries. Thus, some men who had been put down for £500 I reduced to £350, others I put up to £750. Having thus corrected the list, I sent it out to the office to be typed and distributed. A deep and lasting split occurred amongst the Dáil officials immediately. Concerted action became impossible and no overt attempt was ever made by them to act in common against the Government. One or two of the inspectors who were inclined to be a little troublesome showed a certain lack of courage afterwards, on an occasion when an investigation that they were holding was interrupted by armed Irregulars, and I found an opportunity to make them feel that they were in the black books and that it would be dangerous to do anything that would annoy me. The consequence was that they ceased to agitate to any appreciable extent against the old L.G.B. officials.

Some little time before becoming Minister for Local Government and while I was in the Department of Home Affairs I had to deal with a hunger-strike. A number of ordinary criminals, who had perhaps worn political badges, went on hunger-strike. A couple of them, I remember, were men who had robbed a bank in Camden Street. After a few days on hunger-strike the prison doctor began to get shaky, as many doctors do, and to send in alarmist reports about the condition of the prisoners. I directed that while he should visit the prisoners as usual, no reports were to be forwarded to me, as the prisoners would not in any circumstances be released, no matter what their condition of health might be. I then prepared a document and directed the

Governor to read it to the prisoners. In this I stated that they would not be released, that when they died, the Civil War powers that we then possessed would be used to prevent any inquest or any announcement of their deaths in the newspapers, and that they would be buried in unmarked and unrecorded graves in the prison, and that no further report on any of them was to be sent to me till after his death. The prison authorities seemed to have been able to convince the men that the threat was seriously meant, because a few days afterwards they went off hunger-strike and we had no more trouble with their kind thereafter. I always held steadily to the view that an Irish Government should not allow itself to be bluffed and baffled by hunger-strikes, as the British Government had been.

I had for a period, while Minister for Home Affairs, a slight connection with Oriel House. Captain Saurin and some others visited me one morning and informed me that the Army wanted to give up its control of Oriel House and of the C. I. D. and hand it over to the civil authorities. I knew nobody who was suitable to be put in charge of the place, and at the suggestion of J. J. Walsh I appointed Captain Moynihan, who had been successful, and as people said to me later, much too successful, as an investigator in the Post Office under the British. Though it was not disclosed to me at the time, I heard afterwards that his dismissal by the British had been because he had not been as scrupulous as he ought to have been about methods of procuring evidence against those whom he had become convinced were guilty. After Mr. Walsh had recommended him I made a few enquiries about Moynihan before appointing him, but nothing was said to me at the time which would lead me to think he would not be reliable. He remained for a considerable time in Oriel House, being ultimately, I believe, removed from office by Joe McGrath after he had taken it over.

Oriel House was a somewhat doubtful institution, and a good many suggestions were made that its methods were too like the worst we hear of the American police. However, the American police operate under peace conditions, whereas Oriel House at the time was carrying on under war conditions, and if investigators were sometimes somewhat tough with prisoners, I should say that the circumstances were such that tough methods were not only excuseable, but inevitable. However, my personal contact with the institution lasted a very short time. I was never actually in the building, and all I knew about it was what I learned when Moynihan or some of the others came up two or three times a week to the office, really Duggan's office in Government Buildings, where I sat.

I heard later on that Oriel House operated very successfully. I think that Mr. Moynihan had some of the qualities of the detective of fiction and I heard of him following up very slight clues and effecting arrests, and locating arms dumps.

About this time I had very slight contact with another man who volunteered to help with somewhat similar work, Henry Harrison. Harrison, who is still to the fore, had been for some time, as a very young man, unofficial secretary to Parnell. He belonged to a Unionist family in County Down, and was actually the heir to some very heavily encumbered property which included the town of Holywood. He himself appeared before the British House of Lords in a lawsuit connected with the property and was very highly complimented by some of the Law Lords on his conduct of the proceedings. He joined the British Army during the 1914 war, I think in response to the call of Redmond and the leaders of the Irish Party. I understand he had a distinguished record in that conflict. He afterwards became a friend of James MacNeill in the Stephen's Green Club and on several occasions, when

political matters were being discussed, he took the Sinn Féin side very strongly.

James MacNeill introduced Harrison to a number of Ministers. At one stage during the Civil War, when groups of Irregulars carrying revolvers made attacks unexpectedly on people and buildings, and it proved impossible to deal with by ordinary methods, Henry Harrison volunteered to organise a system of armed civilian patrols. He got together a number of men whom he could trust and, armed with revolvers, they patrolled certain areas where they thought they were likely to meet similar groups of Irregulars. I believe that they did on occasions effect contact and exchange shots with Irregular groups. Kevin O'Higgins was the Minister directly in touch with Henry Harrison, and I remember that for a time, at any rate, he was satisfied that Harrison's patrols were serving a useful purpose and proving very disturbing to marauding Irregulars.

My contact with the Department of Home Affairs in any formal way ended when Kevin O'Higgins came back from the Army after Collins's death and on the assembly of Dáil Éireann. He was then appointed Minister for Home Affairs, as it was called, I think, at the time, and I was appointed to Local Government.

Cabinet meetings, of course, were much more frequent at that time than afterwards, as we were all living in Government Buildings and could come together daily without much trouble and, moreover, we were not much occupied with ordinary departmental or political activity.

I have already mentioned that as soon as the attack on the Four Courts began, a number of Ministers came into Government Buildings and slept on mattresses on the floor. The ante-chamber to the present Cabinet room, which was also the Cabinet room at that time, was used as a kind of

restaurant, and meals were brought in from Mills Restaurant in Merrion Row. Even after the Dáil opened, that continued for some time. Then the attacks on houses, attempted blowing up and burning, became more frequent, and several Ministers were anxious that their wives should be accommodated in Government Buildings. The upper storeys of a wing in the College of Science, adjacent to the Natural History Museum, were taken over. They consisted of a number of large and small laboratories. The Board of Works fitted up temporary partitions in the bigger laboratories and made three bedrooms of eachof them.

The wives of all the Ministers did not come in. Neither did Mrs. Hayes, wife of Michael Hayes, who had been Minister for Education and became Ceann Comhairle. Mrs. Hugh Kennedy, wife of the Attorney General, did not come in either. In fact, now that I think of it, only a minority of the wives came in. Mrs. Kevin O'Higgins, Mrs. J.J.Walsh and my wife were amongst them. What had been a professor's room was made into a dining-room, and another laboratory was fitted up as a kitchen. Mrs. Dick Mulcahy recommended Mrs. Carroll, whose husband was killed when the police raided their house for Dan Breen and Seán Treacy. Accommodation for her son who was a growing boy was found in the place.

After some discussion we decided that under the stress of the Civil War and the irritation of living so close together, it was difficult enough for Ministers to avoid falling out, and that it would be better not to bring the wives into the dining-room, or sitting-room as it was in the evenings. This applied both to wives living in and to those who might call. We made a rule that the wives would be served with breakfast in their own rooms and that they should go outside for other meals. Actually,

some little stresses did arise and I am satisfied that it was a wise regulation, although all of them resented it and probably would have got it upset only that Mr. Cosgrave was very firm about it.

John MacNeill was the most constant occupant of the dining-sittingroom. Dan McCarthy reported that John had written home to Mrs. MacNeill stating that he was prepared to remain indefinitely in the Ministers' quarters as he was winning a pound a night at bridge. In the daytime, John used to sit at a small table by the fire working at the Brehon Laws or something of the kind, and could not be induced to go down to his office. We were told that, on occasion, three or four deputations were there trying to see him, and even when his secretary came for him, John continued with his old manuscripts and sent directions that somebody else was to see the callers on his behalf. John was a most pleasant companion in the quarters, having a fund of stories. He was constantly engaged in jokes of some sort or other. One day, very strong criticism was levelled by other Ministers at the designs which were being considered for the postage stamps. The criticism, though partly serious, was mostly intended to rise J.J. Walsh. It happened that J.J. Walsh, like many Corkmen, had a great objection to Tim Healy. John MacNeill was quite a good draughtsman, and when J.J. said to him, "If you object to the designs why don't you produce a better one yourself?" John spent half an hour working carefully with his pencil, and then brought forward what he recommended as the design for the twopenny stamp - a nicely drawn picture in which the identity of the two figures shown was perfectly clear. It was a representation of J.J. Walsh kneeling on one knee and kissing Tim Healy's ring. J.J. took the joke in good part, but did not agree to the recommendation which we all made that the design should be accepted.

One day, there was some talk about Mary MacSwiney, and J.J.Walsh said that in her school in Cork there had been debate among the girls as to whether or not she had a wooden leg. One of the girls, according to J.J., had tried the suspected limb with a hatpin and had got no reaction. Thereupon, John MacNeill said, "I suppose we would be justified in saying that Mary MacSwiney will stump the country during the next election".

I do not remember many of John MacNeill's witticisms, but am quite clear that he very frequently kept the table amused.

There were a couple of special occasions on which the women were admitted to the diningroom and some of the wives who were not living in the building came in as guests. This was particularly so at Christmas when we had quite a party, so that it was difficult to find space for all.

General Mulcahy very seldom came into the Ministers' quarters and we only met him at Cabinet meetings. Joe McGrath on the other hand was very frequently there. The people actually living in, as far as I remember now, were Liam T. Cosgrave, Kevin O'Higgins, Paddy Hogan, Desmond Fitzgerald, J.J.Walsh, Dan McCarthy, the Whip, Hugh Kennedy, the Attorney-General, Éamon Duggan and J.B.Whelehan, who was at the time Deputy Minister for Industry and Commerce.

A little later on a number of deputies who, for various reasons, were regarded as subject to attack, were housed in Buswell's Hotel in Molesworth Street, just across Kildare Street from Leinster House. The place had, of course, a guard of its own, as well as being close to the troops stationed in Leinster House. I never happened to go to Buswell's Hotel at the time. My clearest recollection in connection with it relates to the installation in

it of Frank Bulfin. At a certain time during the Civil War severe threats were issued against members of the Dáil. Actually, Bagwell of the Great Northern Railway, who was a Senator, was kidnapped. He was released, however, when Dan Hogan, with a certain amount of deliberate publicity, gathered about forty of the prominent Irregular prisoners into Mountjoy, and it was expected that the number of executions which would follow any injury to Bagwell would far exceed the number which followed the shooting of Seán Hales and Bagwell was nominally allowed to escape.

Senator Oliver Gogarty was kidnapped and escaped by swimming the Liffey, an exploit which was the subject afterwards of some comic verses, which Gogarty had not the quickness to claim as his own until some months afterwards. Gogarty came back to Government Buildings from the Civic Guard Depot a very much shaken man, and went to England for a period shortly afterwards.

Old George Sigerson, who was a Senator, was induced to resign. Another Senator, when threatened, came up to Dublin to resign also but spoke to me first as a friend, and I succeeded in dissuading him.

Finally, Frank Bulfin was subjected to some sort of terrorism, and sent in a letter of resignation to the Speaker of the Dáil. Michael Hayes, instead of reading it out to the Dáil, which would have made the resignation effective, handed it over to Mr. Cosgrave. Cosgrave decided that Bulfin must be interviewed and dissuaded. A group of three men, one of whom was Joe O'Reilly, was sent to bring Bulfin to town. They exceeded their instructions, but the effect was very good. As told by Joe O'Reilly to me, what happened was that they went first to Frank Bulfin's house, where they were told that he had gone to the fair in the adjacent town. They arrived

there when the fair was pretty well over, and began making enquiries about Frank, ultimately finding him enjoying a drink in a public-house. They told him that President Cosgrave had sent them to bring him to Dublin. Bulfin asked if he was under arrest. They said "Not at all", but showed the points of their revolvers through their coats, and told him it would be advisable for him to come to town. Bulfin thereupon entered to motor with them; and somewhere along the road they performed a charade, which certainly shook him. They stopped the car and one of them proposed that they "shoot the oul' bastard and have no more trouble with him". Another agreed that it would be the simplest procedure, while a third, ostensibly more cautious, argued that Cosgrave would be so annoyed with them that they would be in endless trouble. After what appeared to be a long wrangle, the fellow who was against such bloodshed seemingly succeeded in restraining the others, and Bulfin was put back into the motor car and brought to town. When he arrived Mr. Cosgrave sent for me so that the two of us might interview him, one of us being fierce and the other soft with him if necessary. However, there was no trouble, because the wrangle on the roadside had convinced Frank that it might be more dangerous to resign from the Dáil than to stay in it. When Cosgrave told him that he need not go home, that he could live in Buswells Hotel where he would have a number of T.D's for companionship and where there was a constant guard, he agreed at once to remain a member of the Dáil. Cosgrave thereupon got a bottle of whiskey, gave him a drink and, as it was late at night, asked me if I could get my wife to prepare a meal for him as the maids were all gone to bed. She did this, and Frank and I had our supper together. I then handed him over to Joe O'Reilly who took him across to Buswell's Hotel.

Frank remained in the Dáil. He voted solidly with the Government and spoke strongly for us in the ensuing general election.

We had no other incidents of the kind. I suppose Frank's story got round amongst the T.D's, but I must say that the incident made me feel very strongly that once civil war is started, all ordinary rules must go by the board, and that if there happened to be a big scare following, perhaps, one or two additional deaths of T.D's or Senators, it would be our duty to apply sufficient counter terror to neutralise the terror which was being used against us.

After Kevin O'Higgins assumed charge of Home Affairs he arranged that General O'Duffy should be appointed Commissioner of the Civic Guards. I expect that General O'Duffy had applied to him for the appointment, because I remember that just before the outbreak of the Civil War O'Duffy and I were in Monaghan electioneering, where we were joint pro-Treaty candidates, and either on the journey to Monaghan or on the journey from Monaghan, O'Duffy spoke to me at great length about his interest in police work and about his belief in his own capacity to do it well. In any case, the opinion of O'Duffy amongst Ministers was very high at the time. His excessive vanity had not manifested itself, and he was thought of as a strict, thoroughgoing, enterprising man, who could tackle such a job as the restoration and maintenance of discipline amongst the Civic Guards very well. In fact, I am satisfied that O'Duffy did do a very good job in his earlier days as a police chief.

O'Higgins had some little trouble in getting the voluntary resignation of Staines and of Paddy Brennan.

Staines, indeed, was relatively willing to go, though he felt there was some reflection on him in requiring his resignation but, on the other hand, I think he believed that after what had happened he could never make a success of the post of Commissioner and that it was necessary that a new man should be put at the head of the Force. Paddy Brennan was definitely more sticky. Ultimately, however, he realised that he had to go, and he approved of the appointment of O'Duffy. He was induced to accept an alternative post as Superintendent of the Dáil. Whenhe actually took up duty he practically refused to do any work as he disliked the post intensely. In collaboration with the Government, Michael Hayes pursued the policy of merely insisting that he attend and remain in the place every day, without bothering much whether he did anything or not. After a time, the boredom got him down to such an extent that he was quite willing to carry out the duties assigned to him, and remained in the Dáil for a great many years.

O'Duffy, once he had taken charge of the Guards and assured them that, as far as he was concerned, the past was past and that nobody was going to suffer for any part he may have had in the mutiny, began to enforce discipline with a stern hand. I was told that the first night that he was on duty in the Castle he heard a Guard quarrelling with another and using obscene language. O'Duffy dismissed him instanter, though in ordinary circumstances, the offence would not have called for dismissal. As far as I could hear, he established supremacy over the Guards very quickly, and after a little time no doubt remained as to their discipline and loyalty.

Although it had early on been taken for granted that any police force which we should send out to replace the R.I.C. would be an unarmed force, we actually, in the circumstances that prevailed when we were ready to open

the first Civic Guard stations, had some difficulty in definitely deciding that the Guards must be unarmed. Some Ministers thought that they would be hunted out of their stations within a few days if they had not guns to defend themselves. Others held that to arm them would only be to subject them to attack and that if they were not driven out of the stations they would be besieged in them and confined to them, and that the position would be worse than if we did not attempt to send out police at all. This argument prevailed, and we finally came to the conclusion that the only thing that would get real sympathy for the Guards was to have them, for the time being, defenceless against armed attack. It was not long till it became obvious that the decision to have the Guards unarmed was justified and, although detectives were afterwards supplied with arms, the attitude of the population to the Guards was very different from their attitude towards the R. I. C.

As far as I remember, Kevin O'Higgins was firm all the time for having the Guards unarmed. I do not know what views O'Duffy had, as during that period the Cabinet as a whole had no meeting with him. In fact, I do not think that after his appointment O'Duffy appeared again before the Cabinet as a whole until well after the Civil War, when he was recalled temporarily to the Army as Chief of Staff after the mutiny. We had one very serious brush with him, as Chief of Police, a little later - the first of a number. Some Civic Guards had beaten up Irregulars who were suspected of terrorism or of some action which could not be proved. The Cabinet felt that if Civic Guards were to be allowed to beat up anybody, the results would be serious. O'Duffy had to admit mis-behaviour by the Guards, but he pleaded a measure of justification. He pleaded also the good record of the

Guards concerned, and alleged that anything that they did was not for personal advantage or from personal motives, but was for the repression of a certain type of crime for which it was difficult to obtain conviction in Court. In spite of all he could say, the Cabinet decided that the Guards in question (I think it was in County Wicklow) should be dismissed. O'Duffy thereupon stated that the Cabinet had no power to dismiss members of the Guards, as the Act laid it down that Guards should be appointed and dismissed by the Commissioner. O'Duffy was asked to retire from the room, and the members of the Cabinet agreed that they would not tolerate such an attitude on his part. When he returned, he was told by Mr. Cosgrave, on behalf of the Cabinet, that if he did not dismiss the Guards in question, as requested by the Government, the Government would provide itself with a new Commissioner who would dismiss them. O'Duffy went away without making any promise, but next day he dismissed the offending Guards.

After Collins's death, there was for some time a feeling that the Civil War would speedily end as major resistance was broken, but actually it began to assume a chronic character. There was a widespread sort of unwillingness to really carry on the struggle with a full energy. Feeling, such as I heard Dick Hegarty express in the very early days of the fighting, appeared to linger on. I had an argument with Dick at that time in the diningroom beside the Cabinet chamber, in the course of which he said he hoped that however the struggle ended, the 1st Southern Division, and in particular some of the Cork Brigades, would not be eliminated.

There was a tendency to hope that the struggle might be brought to an end by negotiations. Individual

Commanders in various areas, instead of pursuing the war with full vigour as they ought to have done, were inclined to try to make contact with their opposite numbers and enter upon discussions. This seems to have extended, with the exception of a few higher officers, right through the top ranks of the Army. One Cabinet meeting took place at which it was decided that nobody on behalf of the Government would negotiate any more, and that military operations would be carried on with all rigour until the Irregular forces surrendered. General Mulcahy was present at the meeting and apparently agreed in full with the decision, though he had already on his own account made an arrangement to meet Mr. de Valera.

As far as we could learn afterwards, Mulcahy went straight out of the Cabinet meeting, got into his car at the door of Government Buildings and drove to a rendezvous with Mr. de Valera. Nothing came of the conversations which took place between them and quite possibly the other Ministers would never have heard of the meeting but for the fact that a Father McGuinness, I think his name was, who was Provincial or General of the Carmelites and who had brought about the meeting, wished to publish a statement in the Press about it. Apparently the whole business had been fixed on the understanding that the meeting would be entirely secret. General Mulcahy reminded Father McGuinness of this, but such was the priest's desire to have a statement published that General Mulcahy was afraid that in spite of his protests a communication would go out to the Press. He accordingly asked Mr. Cosgrave to call a meeting of the Cabinet to hear a statement from him.

I went down to the meeting, like others, wondering what could have occurred that made General Mulcahy wish to meet all the Ministers so urgently. I remember

perfectly well sitting almost diagonally opposite General Mulcahy, who was at the far end of the table from me on the opposite side. There was a sort of awkward pause while we were waiting for some Ministers who were a few minutes late. Then Mr. Cosgrave, who may or may not have known what was to come, asked General Mulcahy to speak. General Mulcahy's first words, said as a joke, were, "Let everyone put his gun on the table". He then proceeded to confess to us that before the previous meeting he had made arrangements to meet Mr. de Valera, had refrained from disclosing the fact while the discussion was taking place, and had gone straight away to the rendezvous. He then gave some details of his conversation with de Valera, to which I think nobody paid much attention. When he had finished there was a dead silence for what seemed to be minutes. All of us realised that the only thing that it was proper to say was that General Mulcahy must hand in his resignation. In view of the state of affairs generally, and in view of the way in which the Government was cut off from the Army, none of us felt that we could make that demand. When the silence had lasted so long that the Cabinet meeting seemed on the point of becoming rather like a Quaker prayer meeting, Mr. Cosgrave said, "That's all", got up and left his chair, and all of us left the room without a single word of comment on General Mulcahy's disclosure.

Personally, I may say that the whole incident affected my mind very deeply in regard to General Mulcahy, and I never had full confidence in him afterwards.

Although I did not discuss the matter with Kevin O'Higgins, or if I did, I have forgotten anything he may have said, I am perfectly certain that some of his very strong feeling against General Mulcahy dated from that time.

Another incident occurred some time later which also deepened the gap between General Mulcahy and the majority of the Cabinet. There were certain officers with whom the Cabinet was dissatisfied. One was Paddy Daly who was in command in Kerry, and another was Prout in Kilkenny. The Cabinet desired that these officers should be removed from their commands, or at least should have their powers and areas restricted. General Mulcahy came back from a tour of the various areas not only without having carried out the instructions of the Cabinet but having confirmed one of these officers in his command and having extended the territory of the other.

One morning I became aware that Kevin O'Higgins was in a state of considerable agitation. It was a Sunday morning and he was anxious to get some documents which had come into the Department of Justice the previous day. Apparently, Henry Friel who had been handling them had locked them away. Ultimately, Kevin succeeded in getting them from Mr. Friel's desk and took them to Mr. Cosgrave. They concerned the beating up by soldiers of two girls in Kenmare, daughters of a local doctor, who had been associated with the Black-and-Tans, and who were making themselves very friendly with officers of our Army. We were, of course, in a state of irritation about how things were being done in Kerry. Although other Commands were executing Irregulars who came within the regulations, we could not induce the Commander in Kerry to execute anybody. The natural result was that soldiers who had seen their comrades shot down or blown up by mines planted by men who quickly surrendered when brought to fight, took the law into their own hands and quite a number of Irregulars were put to death in a criminal and unjustifiable way, sometimes being forced to remove land mines which, according to the suspicions which prevailed amongst members of the Government,

had been deliberately planted.

Personally I was never as excited about these crimes and suspicions as Kevin, Paddy Hogan and Desmond Fitzgerald were. I felt that, however wrong, such things were inevitable in war, and that if those who were irregularly put to death were not, by any chance, innocent persons, the performance was no worse than happens in every such contest. Whoever were the people with whom Kevin was in contact, he was certainly getting more frantic about Army misbehaviour, and he made up his mind to bring it to a test in the Kenmare case.

Apparently, the girls were dragged out of their beds and were beaten with belts. No great harm was done to them, and the outrage was more an indignity than anything else. O'Higgins was for having drastic action, for having the Commanding Officer dismissed, and for having those who were suspected, or who might come under suspicion as a result of further investigations, brought before a courtmartial. Mulcahy, of course, resisted this very strongly, and there were bitter exchanges between himself and O'Higgins. Cosgrave was anxious to prevent dissension going further, and suggested that all the documents be referred to Hugh Kennedy, who was then Attorney General.

The meeting was adjourned till next day, and Kennedy produced a written report in which he pointed out the lack of evidence and various other factors that would have made a courtmartial difficult. He also, as well as I remember, brought out the fact that the suspicions which Ministers entertained were the result of rumour and particularly of Irregular propaganda, and could not be made the basis of legal proceedings. Personally, though I was never in favour of outrages and was strongly in favour of the removal of O'Daly from the Kerry command, largely because he was not prepared to stand up to the necessary

business of carrying out executions when they were justified, I did not agree with O'Higgins in feeling particularly revolted at what seemed to me to be merely a case of a trouple of tarts getting a few lashes that did them no harm. Even Desmond Fitzgerald, although more in agreement with O'Higgins that I was, did not feel that we could proceed to produce an Army crisis over a matter which was essentially only an ordinary war incident.

O'Higgins threw great scorn on Kennedy's opinion, and ultimately said he would leave the meeting and the Government. He rose from the table, and as he went towards the door Mr. Cosgrave warned him that all documents in the building were Government property, that if he left he was entitled to take nothing with him, and that if he did take anything appropriate steps would follow. After the departure of O'Higgins, whom no one was prepared to accompany, the Cabinet meeting continued and other business was done.

I believe that some of the Ministers went up later to see O'Higgins in his room. I did not go, because I felt that he had brought himself to the point of being almost hysterical about the affair, and I was not in sufficient sympathy with him to be able to talk him into a calmer frame of mind. Of course, I did not want him to leave the Government and I would have gone to him later if anybody had told me it would be useful.

Both Paddy Hogan and Desmond Fitzgerald told me of their talks with him about the incident which, by the way, must have taken place after the coming into force of the Constitution, because Hogan was not present at the Cabinet meeting. Hogan at the time was anti-Mulcahy, anti-Cosgrave and anti-Hugh Kennedy. Desmond was more reasonable, and it was plain to me from his talk that Kevin would not carry out

his threat of leaving the Government. There were Cabinet meetings in the next two or three days over various matters, and Kevin did not come to them. Before the end of a week, however, he simply re-appeared at a meeting, and nothing further was said about the subject of dispute.

I noticed, however, that the whole incident left Kevin with somewhat stronger feelings against General Mulcahy. In fact, after that, Kevin seldom referred to him in ordinary conversation otherwise than as "Mull". However, Kevin O'Higgins was very much given to short-naming and nicknaming.

I shall go back now to the period prior to the coming into force of the Constitution. The principal business of the Dáil when it finally did meet in the Autumn was the passage of the Constitution as agreed upon by the British authorities and as published on the eve of the general election. Kevin O'Higgins was designated by Mr. Cosgrave as the Minister who would lead for the Government in the debates in the Dáil. He announced when the document was first before the chamber that there were certain clauses which represented agreed interpretations on which the Government would stand or fall, but that there were others which the House might amend if they so liked without producing a Government crisis. O'Higgins's handling of the debates was, I thought, extremely good, and it certainly established his position with Deputies and with the country at large. He was, because of political inexperience, very much taken with certain fancy provisions in the draft Constitution, which have since been dropped. He was, for instance, in favour of the clause which limited excessively the number of Ministers who would be collectively responsible as a Cabinet and which provided that a number of other Ministers should be chosen by a committee of the Dáil

and should be individually responsible to the Dáil. Actually, that clause never worked except insofar as it prevented Paddy Hogan and one or two other Ministers, who got chosen as Ministers individually responsible, from being present at Cabinet meetings.

Although the grip of the Irregulars was loosened comparatively soon, to such an extent as to enable the Dáil to meet, guerilla activities continued almost everywhere, at least from time to time. Gradually, as I have said, we came to the conclusion that steps must be taken to restore order fully, because what was going on was demoralising large numbers of the people. Ultimately we decided that men found in illegal possession of arms should be brought before committees of officers for trial and, if found guilty, executed. We decided on committees of officers because the procedure for courts-martial was so strict and so cumbersome that it would ordinarily be much easier and quicker to get a conviction before a special Civil Court than before a court-martial.

All these decisions were, of course, known and generally approved by supporters of the Government in the Dáil.

Party meetings at that time had a special importance and, because Deputies felt that they could not attack the Government proposals in the Dáil, nearly all important matters were mentioned at Party meetings in advance where, speaking in camera, Deputies could say anything they might want to say.

Some of the people who approved of the committees of officers must not have realised that the Government was in earnest about the proposals.

The first to suffer under the new arrangements

were three young fellows who were caught with guns somewhere in County Dublin. They were duly brought before a committee of officers and sentenced to death. For some reason, Mr. Cosgrave was not able to be present at the Party meeting which was held after their condemnation, and I happened to be the Minister whose duty it was to tell the Deputies that these men were to be executed the following morning. As I stood addressing the Party, I noticed dismay on several faces. Pádraig Ó Máille, whose face was very large and fat, sat directly in front of me and I remember that as he listened to the news, his whole visage shook like a blancmange. There were some appeals to the Government to let the young men off, but they came from a small minority of the Party. The big body of Deputies were more than tired of long drawn out sniping activities, and were fully prepared to support the Government in its determination that, if necessary, drastic steps should be taken.

The executions presumably gave a shock to some members of the public, but many indications reached us to show that the general mass of the people were behind us.

Immediately after the execution of the three young lads, Erskine Childers was found illegally in possession of a pistol, and he became subject to the regulations. He was duly tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. In his case, however, all sorts of forces went into operation to try and prevent his execution. Even English public men, members of the House of Lords, found means to convey appeals for clemency. Influential people in Ireland like Mrs. J. R. Green and James MacNeill, afterwards Governor General, also sent in their appeals. Moreover, action was taken in the court by way of Habeas Corpus. All of us felt that no mercy could be shown in Childers' case. It was not merely that many of us thought him

largely responsible for the actual occurrence of the Civil War by reason of the line he took during Treaty negotiations and particularly in the Treaty debates where he foretold things about the English attitude to the Treaty which subsequent events proved to be entirely unfounded, but which helped to make certain people ready to go to extremes to prevent the acceptance and implementation of the Treaty. There was also the fact that three young people with no influence and with no knowledge of affairs, who had been caught with guns just before Childers, had been sent before the firing squad. I think every Minister believed that if we were to reprieve Childers, having executed ignorant ordinary young fellows, our position would be impossible vis-a-vis the public and vis-a-vis the Army.

There was a certain fear amongst some Ministers that some cracked Judge might order his release. At that time a single Judge could decide a Habeas Corpus case. There was some little discussion amongst us as to what should occur in case a Judge should abuse his position, refuse to recognise the state of war and order the military to release Erskine Childers. Some of us, including myself, believed that if that happened we should shut down the ex-British courts (just as we had shut down the Dáil Éireann Courts) until the conflict had ended. There were other Ministers who would not have agreed with that course, and if Childers' release had been ordered, there would, of a certainty, have been grave division amongst us. Because of this feeling, one or two Ministers were of the opinion that after a Judge had discharged the Habeas Corpus application, the sentenced man should be taken out instanter and executed before further application could be made to another Judge. That was opposed by most Ministers and, in particular, was opposed with great force by General Mulcahy.

Ultimately the way was clear and the execution took place.

Personally, although I was as firmly in favour of executing Erskine Childers as any member of the Government, I had no personal ill-feeling towards him at all, and I had never been angry with him for his attitude on the Treaty. I had no belief that there was the slightest foundation for the charges of being practically a British agent, which Griffith used to bring against him, and I never hesitated to say so. I regarded his execution solely as an act of war, necessitated by public policy and absolutely essential to the country's welfare. I regarded also the sentence as being just, even though it was a sentence for a technical offence. A technical offence in a war situation can be as serious as the greatest ordinary crime in normal times.

As the Civil War went on there was some slight divergence of opinion in the ranks of the pro-Treaty Deputies. I never quite got to the bottom of it, but there was certainly some suggestion of a split and of an attempt to bring the Civil War to an end by negotiations. J. J. Walsh was supposed to be cognizant of it, if not one of the promoters. He was on somewhat bad terms with some of the other Ministers. However, although whispers went round that there would be a move in the Dáil with a view to setting up a composite Government with some dissident members of Cumann na nGael, Labour members and Farmers Deputies, nothing came of it. Although I was very friendly with J. J. Walsh in after years and often in his company, I never enquired of him about the matter. I only know that all Ministers, because of various hints pieced together, believed that some negotiations had been taking place. George Gavan Duffy, an ex-Minister, was the second prominent man supposed to be involved in whatever moves took place.

Even if the matter had come into the open, I do not think that there would have been any danger of the Government being out-voted in the Dáil. The opinion of most Deputies was that the matter had to be fought to a finish and the whole chapter ended in such a way that there would never again be civil conflict in the country.

When the Constitution had been passed, the new Government was established under the title "The Executive Council", and voting took place for the new Senate which was elected, on the basis of proportional representation, by members of the Dáil. As far as the Government Party was concerned, the procedure which was followed at subsequent elections was adopted. At a Party meeting the names of those to be supported were decided on, and then the individual members were allotted the people for whom they were to vote.

I remember that the name of Dr. Lombard Murphy was suggested as a possible Senator at the Party meeting. His name was turned down with great emphasis, people remembering the article in the "Irish Independent" calling for the execution of James Connolly, and remembering the attitude of the paper on other issues during the struggle.

The only person on the Government list who was not elected was James MacNeill, who afterwards became High Commissioner in London, and later still, Governor General. The deputies allotted to vote for him apparently ratted and returned others.

One of the members who failed to vote as directed was, as far as I remember, Martin Nally, a Mayo deputy, who had been anxious for the return of someone who was not selected at the Party meeting.

While the Senate was being fixed the question of

appointing a High Commissioner in London to take office as soon as the new Government was formed was discussed. After some talk it was decided to ask Professor R.J.Henry, who had the chair of classics in Queen's University, Belfast, and who had written a very favourable book on Sinn Féin, to take the post. I was present at the interview which Mr. Cosgrave and Kevin O'Higgins had with him in Leinster House. He refused the office, largely I think, because the summary executions to which I shall now refer took place between the despatch of the Government's letter to him and his interview with us. He felt, it seemed to me, that the Free State might yet fall to pieces and that if he left Queen's University, Belfast, as he would be forced to do since he could not hope to get leave of absence, he might find himself stranded and discredited.

On the day on which the voting for the Senate took place, Pádraig Ó Máille and Seán Hales were fired on on the quays as they drove on an outside car to the Dáil. Seán Hales was killed and Pádraig Ó Máille wounded, but not very seriously. Some amusement was caused by Pádraig Ó Máille's message from the hospital in which he adjured deputies not to forget Counihan. Mr. Counihan, who was at that time elected Senator and was for a long time afterwards in the House, was Pádraig Ó Máille's favourite candidate, and Pádraig was afraid that his absence from the voting might leave Mr. Counihan short.

I cannot remember exactly what took place in the Dáil when it assembled after the shooting, but the proceedings were brief.

I went later on that evening, as I was Minister for Local Government and had, therefore, responsibility for electoral matters, to the College of Science where the counting of the Senate votes was in progress. Two

or three deputies were there, including the Ceann Comhairle, Michael Hayes, and we discussed the afternoon's happening. We agreed amongst ourselves that such an attack on the Dáil had to be met by drastic measures and that they should be taken at once. As we were breaking up and as I was going off to the Cabinet room to attend the meeting of the Executive Council which had been summoned, one of the group said to me, "It will be no use taking action next week. Whatever is going to be done must be done tomorrow".

As I went across to the Cabinet room I was thinking of what I should propose in case nothing better was suggested. I took the view that the lives of the men who had been in the Four Courts were forfeit as rebels and that although we had not brought them to trial after the Four Courts surrender nor in the interval, it was still open to us to have them tried by the equivalent of a drumhead courtmartial. What I had, therefore, in mind was that a special court or committee of officers should be set up forthwith and that a number of the leaders of the Four Courts garrison should be brought before it charged with rebellion, and executed if found guilty, as they doubtless would be.

My watch was apparently wrong, because when I reached the Cabinet chamber the Executive Council was already in session, all members being present except myself and Joe McGrath. As I moved from the door to my usual place at the table I heard a list of names being read out. They were the names of Mellows, Barrett, O'Connor and McKelvey. As I took my seat I gathered that the proposal was that they should be executed in the morning without any form of trial. It instantly struck me that the terror-striking effect of this would be greater than that of the measure which I myself had thought of proposing. Consequently, I did not put my own suggestion forward but,

on the instant, mentally accepted the suggestion which was actually being made. After a very few minutes' discussion Mr. Cosgrave proceeded to put the question round the table to ascertain whether or not those present agreed with the proposal. I was one of the first two or three to vote; Desmond Fitzgerald was before me. We both agreed to the suggestion. It then came to the turn of Kevin O'Higgins. Kevin, as I have already said, perhaps because he had some legal training and perhaps, also, because he was closely connected with a family which had long been associated with public affairs, was inclined to take a more studied view of many problems than some of the rest of us. He hesitated a little about assenting to the summary executions. He asked whether any other measure would not suffice. The answer he got from two or three was that it would not. His hesitation did not last more than a minute and he did not ask more than two or three questions. He then paused for a moment or two, apparently turning the matter over in his own mind. The rest of us waited in silence watching him, and he finally said, "Take them out and shoot them". The remaining members of the Cabinet then agreed to the executions.

Just when everybody had voted, Joe McGrath entered the room. Everything was gone over again for his benefit and he, like Kevin O'Higgins, hesitated somewhat before agreeing. He asked some questions, and this time Kevin was amongst those who were persuading the hesitater that what was proposed was the only practicable and adequate method of securing deputies against a campaign of assassination which might break up the Dáil. Joe McGrath, after a little talk, fell in with the view of the rest which, indeed, was the only view that men with responsibilities such as we had could take in the circumstances with which we were faced. There would have been no rational alternative to the course actually taken except that which I

myself had in mind before coming to the meeting. Actually, a trial such as I had thought of would have been looked upon by the public as farcical, since the conclusion would have been foregone, and it would have been regarded as an attempt by the Government to shuffle out of the responsibility. We all felt that we were at a crisis in the national history which required us not to shirk any responsibility which came up to us, but to stand out firmly before the people, who were a good deal shaken by the events of previous months.

There was, of course, no discussion of names by the Cabinet. The names presumably were selected by Army officers as those of men whose execution would be most calculated to have the maximum warning effect on members of the Irregular forces in all parts of the country. Personal feelings did not come into the matter at all. I was always myself on the best of terms with Liam Mellows. Kevin O'Higgins had been an intimate friend of Rory O'Connor. Possibly other members of the Cabinet had been friends of one or other of their two companions. We should not, however, in a situation like that have thought of begging that a personal friend should be favoured at the expense of someone whom we happened not to know or to care about personally. I am sure, in spite of some sentimental rubbish which has been published, that no one would have thought for a moment of mentioning the name of an individual either for execution or to be spared. We were dealing with something much more important than personalities and we felt that what we were doing was to direct and authorise the Army to carry out a measure which would be effective in checking terrorism. I frankly regarded it as an act of counter-terror, not of vengeance, and though just, not primarily an act of justice but an extreme act of war.

The suggestion has been made that somebody issued a statement on the decision without the consent of all members

of the Cabinet. That suggestion is without foundation. The statement which was issued had presumably been prepared at Army Headquarters. It was read and accepted by the Cabinet either with a trifling emendation or as it stood. Kevin O'Higgins, like every other member of the Cabinet, fully agreed to the draft which ultimately was published.

I gathered from Mr. Cosgrave afterwards that from the point of view of the ecclesiastical authorities the statement in itself was very bad. It described what was done as a reprisal and solemn warning. Mr. Cosgrave apparently had a bad half-hour with somebody over the matter, and told me that, taking everything into account, the actual decision which we took was fully justified and could not be condemned, but that the statement which we put out, with its use of the word reprisal, was wrong. He deplored that we had not been better advised on the wording of the statement. I never heard Kevin O'Higgins speak about the statement at all. It never was discussed at a Cabinet meeting, and the past being past, I do not think that anybody except Mr. Cosgrave himself was much troubled about the matter. Of course it was, I suppose, in the minds of those of us who had heard about the point that if a further drastic action of the kind became necessary, care would have to be exercised in regard to any announcement which might be issued.

It was thought at one time later on that we might have to take similar action. There was no formal discussion, but the Minister with whom I talked had the view that if it did, in fact, become necessary, we should have to do something on a much more extensive scale and be sure that we did really strike terror. The point at which we thought further action - summary executions - might be necessary was when Senator Bagwell was captured, and it was believed he might be used as a hostage and killed. As already stated, he was allowed to escape. It was believed

in Government circles that the reason he was allowed to escape was that certain measures purporting to be preliminary to drastic action were taken by General Dan Hogan with sufficient publicity to let them reach the Irregulars, and that the mere rumour of them had its effect in frightening them off any action they may have contemplated against Bagwell. I have already referred to this incident.

What was said, and believed by other Ministers as well as myself, though I never took any trouble to authenticate it definitely, was that Dan Hogan got about forty leading Irregulars picked out of various batches of Irregular prisoners and had them all conveyed under specially heavy guards to Mountjoy, doing everything possible to make it appear that they were not likely to emerge alive from the prison. If Dan Hogan did that, it was certainly a very useful and successful manoeuvre, because with Bagwell appearing safe and sound, no summary executions were necessary and danger of the like never arose again.

There is no doubt at all that the summary executions made a tremendous difference in the country. Some people were no doubt horrified, but for others the lesson was that the Government really meant business. I knew one industrialist who was a good many years afterwards an ardent supporter of Fianna Fáil but who, when he read the news, decided on putting through a deal over which he had been wavering for some months. He told me that he had feared to invest so much capital when the State might fall to pieces, but that when he read of the summary executions he made up his mind that, in his own words, "law and order was going to prevail", and that he could purchase the industrial plant in question.

Sir Philip Hanson of the Board of Works, an Englishman who had served a long time in Ireland and whom I had seen a good deal at one period when I was temporarily in charge of arrangements for the starting of the prison camps, remarked to me that we had done something which the British would never have dared to do, but that he was convinced that the result which we sought would be obtained.

From that moment on, we had no longer any doubt that the end of the Civil War would be complete triumph of the principles of majority rule and democratic government. We had ourselves got over the various types of sentimentality and softness and regard for what might be called rebel tradition which had heretofore prevented us from discharging our full duty as independent Irish rulers in Ireland such as had not existed for many centuries. Nevertheless, progress was slow, and destructive guerilla operations against the State continued for a long time with loss of the lives of soldiers and with some losses to our opponents, and with a number of executions carried out by order of military committees. However, the Irregular forces were steadily breaking up and were losing morale, and the crisis came when Liam Deasy under sentence of death made a move which led on to the Cease Fire Order.

I remember at the time that we felt that meetings of the Dáil were extremely useful for the purpose of keeping public opinion informed and for the purpose of answering all the whispering attacks which were made upon us. Always when the Dáil happened to be in recess for a few weeks we got the impression that we were losing ground, whereas when the Dáil came together and when most of what was to be said against us was said in the House

and answered, we got the impression that our supporters were rallying.

Shortly after the Cease Fire Order the decision that we must have a general election was come to. When I went up to County Monaghan to fight the campaign, I remember that the general advice I got was to go slow about prisoners and about executions. I felt personally that that would be the worst possible tactics, and that in any case it would be, in a sense, a betrayal of public interest if I did not say at such a time frankly what I thought about every issue that was before the people. Consequently, I made it a point at every meeting at which I spoke to mention the executions and to assume full personal responsibility for them all. I said scores of times that there was unanimity for every execution and that not a single man had been shot whom I could not have saved by raising my finger and destroying the unanimity. The result of the election was that although my vote was much lower than that of other Ministers, the constituency being a three-member one, my percentage of the total vote cast in the constituency was, I think, the highest in the whole country. There was no doubt at all that at the end of the Civil War the great majority of the voters were prepared to approve fully of the drastic and occasionally terrible steps that the Government had found necessary in order to defend the democratic rights of the people.

Of course, in many places electioneering was difficult. Before I went to County Monaghan at all I remember being at a meeting at Mullingar where Seán Milroy was one of the speakers. Seán had a stentorian voice and managed to get some things across in spite of the constant roar of interruptions to which we were subjected. He, however, was the only man on the platform who succeeded in getting anything

heard even by the section of the crowd nearest the platform.

I might say, by the way, that many things in the election were probably irregular. I remember, on the counting of the votes in County Monaghan, it was found that one box from an area which was supposed to be very anti-Treaty had a large number of votes marked No. 1 to me. I gathered afterwards that the military guard had opened that box in the night, and where a blank space was opposite my name, they changed the No. 1 which had been given to the anti-Treaty candidate to a 4 and put No. 1 opposite my name. Incidents like that, however, did not appreciably affect the total voting.

The discontinuity and repetition noticeable in the foregoing are due to the fact that it was dictated without notes to a shorthand-typist in sessions which did not exceed an hour each, and which were separated from one another by intervals generally of a week, but sometimes of a fortnight. I could not find time to recast it, so I leave it as dictated with some verbal alterations, and the addition of a few lines to cover matters which I accidentally omitted to mention.

Signed Eamon de Blaghd

Date 12/4/54

Witness M. F. Ryan Comdt.

M. F. RYAN, COMD'T.

EAMON de BLAGHD

12/4/54