ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,099

Witness

George Chester Duggan,
Eversley,
Military Road,
Killiney,
Co. Dublin.

Identity.

Assistant to Under-Sec. for Ireland, 1919-1922;
Comptroller and Auditor-General for Northern Ireland,
1945-1949.

Subject.

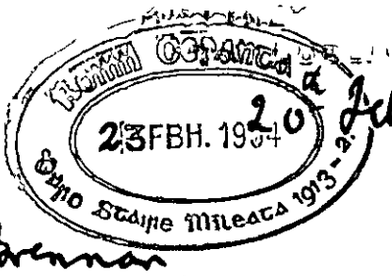
Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle,
1912-1914, and 1919-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2252.

Form B S M 2



20 February 1955.

Dear Mr. Brennan,

I have signed the enclosed extracts which you have made from my unpublished manuscript - "The Life of a Civil Servant", so as to authenticate them. Apart from a couple of verbal corrections I have made no change in them.

My somewhat caustic sketches of two former colleagues, Messrs. Jones & Sam Power, are perhaps not very relevant to

ORIGINAL

Extract from draft of an unpublished book entitled

"THE LIFE OF A CIVIL SERVANT"

by

George Chester Duggan,

Eversley, Military Road, Killiney, Co. Dublin.

(formerly of the Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle)

.....

Chapter 111.

Chief Secretary's Office - second phase 1912-4.

The Shadow of Civil War and the outbreak of the First World War.

Meanwhile from 1912 onwards there was gathering in Ireland that storm which has not even yet blown itself out, whose centre was the Government of Ireland Bill which the Liberal Government had introduced early in that year in order to keep faith with the Nationalist Party. With the Bill itself the rank and file of the Chief Secretary's Office was not allowed to have any concern. It was hatched out in London. There were numerous precedents on which to base it and it was prepared not by Frank Greer, the Irish Draftsman of Bills (who had his seat at the small Irish Office in London and was hardly ever seen in Dublin) but by the British Parliamentary Counsel's Office. What was to be put in it was doubtless intimated to the Under Secretary by the Chief Secretary: the Irish Law Officers of whom at least one was usually a Member of Parliament, must have been consulted, the British Treasury had its grasp firmly on it and would have kept their representative in Dublin, the Treasury Remembrancer, L.H. Hewby, fully posted.

He in turn would have consulted the financial Principal Officer in the Chief Secretary's Office, Sir Frederick Cullinan, on points of detail but the principles of the Bill were settled not in Dublin but by a British Cabinet Committee which carried the Nationalist leader, John Redmond, with it as far as the Committee or he considered it prudent to do so.

As showing into what water-tight compartments even a small Government office can be divided, I mention in passing that though I was a year in the office before Sir Frederick Cullinan retired, I never met him and to the best of my belief I never even saw him. While the Junior Administrative Officers mingled freely with one another and with the Second Division Clerks on their staffs, there seemed to be few contacts between the Principal Officers. There had been too many heart-burnings over promotions in the past and the fact that the two highest posts in the Office always went to outsiders did not improve matters. I heard it stated that Cullinan never spoke to either of his chiefs. He only dealt with them on paper and even avoided that humiliation as much as possible.

When it was clear that the Bill was going to be forced through Parliament, the Ulster Volunteer Force was formed in mid 1912 by Sir Edward Carson with the substantial backing of many of the English Tory Leaders. At first they had no arms so that the Chief Secretary could, without losing face, afford to be cynically amused, a role for which Augustine Birrell was eminently fitted. But the next development needed a decision to be taken. In England Lord Roberts' warning of the imminence of a European war led to the creation of many

miniature rifle clubs, all being affiliated to a Central Association. It was therefore only in fulfilment of a patriotic duty to the Empire that similar clubs should be formed in Ulster towns and villages. But they could not be established without the approval of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The latter were in a quandary as it was obvious to them that the applicants for permission to start such clubs were also the local organisers of the Ulster Volunteer Force, most of them highly respectable citizens. Accordingly, they submitted the applications to the Under Secretary for a ruling. The files piled up in the Administrative Division in which I was working, as Sir James Dougherty on the Chief Secretary's directions procrastinated. The police pointed out that they were being pressed for decisions, but nothing was done and it was an open secret that many of the Clubs having secured ranges and miniature rifles were carrying on unchecked.

Meanwhile in other parts of Ireland Sinn Féin was organising the Irish Volunteers as a counter-blast and they too began to apply for licences for Rifle Clubs. The Chief Secretary's perplexities grew. The suffragettes were also on his track. As I sat in my room one day I heard the sound of breaking glass in the Upper Castle Yard. A lady who wished to call attention to her grievances was walking round armed with a heavy stick smashing the ground floor windows in her progress.

In Dublin the political situation in the North was to some extent overshadowed by the continuous strikes under the leadership of Jim Larkin during the first half of 1913, followed by the big lock-out by employers in the Autumn. Machinery for negotiation was at that time almost non-existent and in any case

feeling on the part of employers and employed ran so high that little hope could be expected that way. If any move was to be made by the Administration it had to come from the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Aberdeen, for at any rate he and his wife had some understanding of the kind of life that was the lot of many of the Dublin poor. Lady Aberdeen's campaign against tuberculosis, despite the mild amusement that it caused not only in society but amongst the poor themselves, opened a pathway through a tangle of dreadful housing conditions, disease and poverty. The Under Secretary on pressure from the Lord Lieutenant had to play the part of an intermediary in default of anyone else. Larkin was no respecter of persons. When he arrived in Sir James Dougherty's room with some of his fellow organisers he reclined on a sofa that a thoughtful Officer of Works provided for afternoon siestas of somnolent Under Secretaries and the odours of plug tobacco provided an atmosphere very different from that of the coronas of normal visitors. In the end the labour troubles collapsed on the surface from attrition but out of them was born the Citizen Army. Some months later, in November, 1913, the National Volunteers came into being. The way had been opened for the Rising of 1916. It was obvious that with three Volunteer Armies in existence, it was only a matter of time before they armed themselves with more than pikes and dummy rifles and in December 1913 the Government issued a Proclamation forbidding the importation of arms. It seemed to them that the Ulster Volunteers were potentially the main source of trouble, and garrisons were being moved into the chief towns to supplement the ordinary complement of British troops.

The situation was being studiously watched in Germany. I still have a copy of a Bavarian newspaper sent to me by a German whom I had met in London in 1909 and with whom I maintained a desultory correspondence: it contained a special article on the Ulster Volunteers and a map showing the strength and situation of British troops in Ulster.

The Ireland of those two fateful years presented an acute problem to many Irish Civil Servants. In the British Civil Service it is easy to talk of loyalty to the Government in power because (apart from recent Communism) revolutionary problems do not arise. In Ireland men are moved by different kinds of loyalties - mostly rooted in religion or old historical causes. It is unthinkable that a Scottish Civil Servant should be shaken in his allegiance because of Bannockburn or Flodden Field, a Welshman by memories of Owen Glendower, or an Englishman by the theological bitternesses of Henry VIII or Queen Mary. But events comparable to these are live issues in Ireland and the kindled ashes of the hidden fires burnt into fierce flame from 1912 to 1922. How could their effect not be keenly felt in the circles of officials and police when their own relatives were likely to be involved on one side or the other, when upbringing inevitably caused a bias and a cold impartiality seemed the attribute of some passionless being?

What were my own feelings at this time? Here was armed resistance on foot in the North to resist change in its form of Government, and a Parliament at Westminster represented in Ireland by the Chief Secretary, the Minister whom I served, preparing to use force to bring about such a change. The Army had had its

instructions from the Secretary of State for War, Colonel Seely, the Navy was to take action at the behest of the firebrand First Lord, Winston Churchill. In the Castle one knew more of these preparations than the man in the street.

Though on my mother's side I had a grandfather, now an old man and long settled in Canada, who though a Colonel in the British Army and of "ascendancy" stock had been far in advance of his time in his life-long opposition to Irish Landlordism and his belief in the need for Home Rule, my own tradition placed me on the side of the Ulstermen. This was strengthened by a double tie - my father and my wife had both been born in County Fermanagh, where her family still lived. Her sister was married and living in Belfast. And here was I bound to give loyal service to an administration determined to use means which seemed to me to be wrong. On a week-end visit to Belfast - the first time I had ever been in that City - I was taken to see Belfast business-men drilling in a hall and practising on a miniature rifle range. At Enniskillen I had seen cavalry formed from the farming community openly executing manoeuvres in fields beside the town. What was one to do? It was possible to postpone a decision in 1913 for though the Bill had passed the House of Commons, there was still the House of Lords in its path and Home Rule Bills had in the past died in infancy. But with the Curragh "Mutiny" of a Britisn Cavalry Regiment in March 1914 which refused to go North and the gun-running at Larne in April 1914, it was necessary for a Civil Servant at the Castle to do some hard thinking. Could he conscientiously continue to carry out orders from his

superiors which might lead to Civil War? The same situation arose with Hitler's Generals in the war of 1939-45 and the Allies' Judicial Commissions have decided that it is no excuse for a soldier to carry out an order which he must know is morally wrong. Is a ruling of this kind equally applicable to a Civil Servant? In the spring of 1914 there were no International Courts to guide one: a question of this kind had never been really posed. But to me there seemed to be only one answer - namely resignation from my post if the crisis reached the climax of force. It never occurred to me that there might be an alternative, namely to seek a transfer to some other Department, whose activities lay in some more peaceful field. In the event, the final decision had not to be taken. The shadow of the First World War fell over the land.

While these great events moved inexorably on, the day to day life of the Chief Secretary's Office continued its normal course. The Treasury was in a saving mood: small as was the office they decided that it should be smaller. My immediate chief, Lawrence Dowdall, being now over sixty years of age, retired to a nice little place in the country which came to him along with a widow who took matrimonial pity on his bachelor state. The post that he held was suppressed and it was left to me to do his work without any increase of pay. On paper it was not quite like that. Edward O'Farrell, the Assistant Under Secretary, graciously assented to their Lordships view that he should undertake the immediate supervision of my work with an increase of £150 a year in his salary. He was quite frank about this: he openly told his friends how

it had been arranged that Duggan would do the work and he would draw the pay. Peace to his ashes: he was a charming chief and never interfered and I didn't feel any grudge against him - it was the luck of the game.

During part of this time I acted as Private Secretary to the Under Secretary. Exceptionally for one who has been reasonably successful in the Civil Service, I was never appointed as a Private Secretary either to the permanent Head of a Department or to a Minister, nor did I ever act as Secretary to a Commission or a Departmental Committee. It is normally the tenure of one of these posts which marks out a Civil Servant for early promotion. A Minister too often expects his Private Secretary to receive preferential promotion and may indeed make his departure from the Private Office conditional on this being done, though I have also known cases where to have fallen out of a Minister's favour has meant hustling his Private Secretary away to another Department and giving him promotion as a sop.

As Acting Private Secretary I saw the District Inspectors Report on the Larne gun-running in April 1914. It was sent over to the Chief Secretary in London by the special bag which left daily (and which during the 1914-18 war carried many a pound of Irish butter in addition to the weightier matters of the law). On its return I saw that Birrell had merely initialled it making only one written comment. At the part of the Report where the District Inspector mentioned the sudden death on Larne pier of a coastguard from heart failure, Birrell had entered a marginal note "Winston's first victim". Very few papers in fact went to the Chief Secretary: he was kept informed of what was

going on in the office by means of a weekly "journal", but doubtless what an earnest official thought worthy of record was but chicken feed to him. The Opposition, nay even his own friends in the House of Commons kept him posted in matters that were more bread and butter to a politician's life.

Nearer came the double crisis. The year 1914 saw that once rare phenomenon in a Civil Servant's life - inability to take one's leave in anything approaching full measure. The pace of official life was quickening. The situation was continually shifting.

In July 1914 came the Nationalist answer to the gun-running at Larne - the landing of arms at Howth outside Dublin, when there was a clash with the Dublin Metropolitan Police on the march-back of the Volunteers to the City, the Assistant Commissioner of Police having made up his mind that if law and order were to be maintained it was his duty to maintain them. This incident was immediately followed by a shooting affray between a party of the King's Own Scottish Borderers and a mob in the streets of Dublin. Some scapegoat had to be sought and the Assistant Commissioner was the man selected, as his chief had been away on a few days leave at the time and could not be held responsible. But Sir John Ross, the Commissioner, was not going to leave the blame on his subordinate's shoulders. I remember seeing him, in an explosive state of pent-up rage, outside the Under Secretary's Office waiting to be admitted. At the meeting that ensued he consigned Sir James Dougherty, the Chief Secretary and the Government to the waste-paper basket for ineptitude and handed in his

own resignation.

This was the juncture at which I received directions to prepare a warrant virtually appointing General Macready to exercise martial law in Ulster: he was to receive a warrant as a Resident Magistrate for the whole Province - this would vest in him full civil power along with the Military Command which he already held. The ordinary Resident Magistrates still retained their powers but clearly the stage was set to supersede them in an emergency. The precedent for such an appointment was found in the post of Commissioner to which General Redvers Buller (later to be the defeated hero of the early months of the Boer War) was appointed some twenty years earlier when the Co. Kerry was seething with agrarian unrest.

I thought to myself that this was the beginning of the end. Combined with Churchill's threat to move portion of the fleet to Belfast, this piece of paper awaiting the signature of the Lord Lieutenant looked like a death warrant.

These happenings darkened the whole life of the office for two years. I do not know what were the inner feelings of Lord Aberdeen, the Viceroy, for he certainly was no man of blood. He was too remote a dignitary to be seen in the Chief Secretary's Office and as there was no Irish Parliament he could not show himself there. He was a survival and an anachronism. But he sat at the head of the Irish Privy Council. The latter body except when the Judicial Members sat to hear appeals against Fishery Bye-Laws was but a registering body for the Executive:

it signed statutory orders. Normally the notices of summons only went to a hand-picked few members, thus ensuring that no awkward questions were raised by Right Honourables who might not agree with the policy underlying a particular order. On these occasions the Clerk of the Council (a Civil Servant to whose Council work was added that of dealing with appeals from prisoners for the Royal Clemency) appeared in an immaculate frock-coat, the Under Secretary (who was a member of the Council) had modernized his into a morning coat. There was a note of formality about the proceedings, and the Clerk (C.M. Martin-Jones) maintained towards the rest of us a certain air of mystery which heightened the effect. More often than not the sole business of the Council was hurriedly to swear in Lords Justices every time the Lord Lieutenant crossed over to England or Scotland. It was a curious feature of the Church of Ireland prayer-book that it assumed that every clergyman in a remote country parish must be aware of these sudden Viceregal movements and, forgetting the Viceroy <u>pro tem</u>, in formal prayer call down blessings on these birds of passage, some of whom towards the close of Castle rule were Roman Catnolics.

My casual reference to Martin-Jones deserves amplification though it may seem out of place between a Lord Lieutenant and a Minister of the Crown, but in some respects he was a unique Civil Servant. A mathematical wrangler at Cambridge, his intellectual powers must have been first-class and he was a brilliant pianist. But he was (or became) an incessant talker. He had ideas and they poured from him in an unending

stream. He had solutions for everything - above all for the Irish question - though they varied from time to time. He reorganised the office in imagination scores of times and always in such a way that C.M.J. came out on top. It was all a monologue: it was not necessary to reply or argue. All one could do was to hold one's head above water and swim for the nearest land. In the Castle he did some work but when years later I met him in the Home Office I doubt if he did any. At that later period one could not get away merely by leaving the office, for he had a cheque to cash at the Bank or some other reason for going abroad and he would follow you up and down Whitehall, into the by-ways of Piccadilly and even the tube was an uncertain refuge. His conversation is now in Heaven.

There too, I trust, high up in the angelic hierarchy is Sam Power of whom I saw little in the office but heard much, for during most of the period that I was there he was attached to the Irish Office in London, returning on promotion to Dublin in the year 1914. He cultivated the lighter graces, affected familiarity with the entourage of Lords Lieutenant, attended levées at the Castle, fixed you with his monocled eye in the style then approved by the flaneurs of Piccadilly and the mashers of Gaiety girls. In earlier days when attending to such office duties in the Castle as could with safety be entrusted to him, he would strike up acquaintance with the officer of the guard in the Upper Castle yard (I wonder if the mural decorations with which some of the more artistic subalterns embellished the guard room in their hours of boredom are still there) and

when the hour had struck inveigle himself into partaking of whatever lunch the officer"s batman could produce for his master. His minutes on official files were masterpieces in their way. What they lacked in subtlety or sweep they made up for by brevity, for they usually consisted of the single word "Submitted" as the file went on to higher authority for a ruling. But if it were a question of precedence at the Viceregal Court, the etiquette of the Irish Privy Council, or the preparation of a list of persons to be invited to a reception he was in his element. Then the pseudo-quizzical expression of a face that was trained to represent that of a retired Army Captain of restricted brain power would take on a weightier aspect. Is it any wonder that he finished up as Private Secretary to Lord Wimborne, the Viceroy of the years 1915-18, and acquired the Order of the Bath, a chastening thought for the seekers after or the recipient of Royal favours?

A shy migrant was the Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell, like the corncrake heard but rarely seen. Though the Chief Secretary's Lodge was always available he seldom come to Dublin. I never caught sight of him. When he did come he did not go to lunch in any of the aristocratic Clubs in the City. He found a little quiet eating house hard by the Castle and there consumed his rolls and coffee, or was it beer? His era of essay-writing had already ended, or doubtless this backwater would have figured in them. But when I was no longer in the Castle and might expect to have been forgotten by him, he wrote me a very touching letter of sympathy on the death of my two

brothers in Gallipoli in August 1915. But let me return to my own work.

The light over Europe was being quenched. On 23rd July, 1914, King George's attempt to reconcile North and South at a meeting in Buckingham Palace failed. On 4th August the first World War broke out and the Government of Ireland Act was put into cold storage.

On 3rd August, 1914, (August Bank Holiday) my wife and I took a walk to the foothills of the Three Rock Mountain from which one could see the Man-of-War Roads in Dublin Bay. There lay at anchor five or six transports shortly to sail with horse and troops from Ireland to France. War had already stretched out its hand thus far. Its impact on the Castle came on 5th August when there arrived from the Home Office in London copies of the various Proclamations and Orders arising from a state of war. New problems arose for the Civil Servant: The Chief Secretary's office became the medium through which the Home Office handled the problem of aliens, enemy and neutral. I interviewed waiters cut off from the Fatherland - could they show that they were oppressed Czechs or Slavs, not arrogant Austrians or dominating Germans? Or should they follow others into internment? And what about the harmless Governess? Was she to be allowed to return home through neutral Holland? The strangest meeting I had was with a Russian youth of the name of Kodak from Eastern Turkestan. He explained that his grandfather was a veteran of the Crimean War who had been given a free grant of land in that remote Russian dependency. Attached to the

grant was the privilege to his descendants of freedom from conscription. His son sent young Kodak to Aberdeen University to study Agricultural Science but the damp of the North Sea began to affect a lad brought up in the clear air of the Steppes - accordingly he had moved to the College of Science in Dublin and now war had cut him off. If he could only get to Newcastle-on-Tyne he believed that the Russian Consulate could provide him with a passage to Norway. There was no fund at our disposal to help such cases, but I chanced the genuineness of the case and "advanced" him a couple of pounds from my own pocket to get him to Newcastle. He sent me a short note from there saying that his passage had been arranged. What happened to him? Did the war of 1914-18 sweep him into his grave? Does he carry on with Communal farming in his remote Socialist Soviet Republic?

Emergency orders had quickened the pace of official life in the Castle but a second cause was the presence of a new Under Secretary. Sir James Dougherty had retired and Sir Matthew Nathan whose previous experience had been in the Colonial Service had succeeded him: his enquiring mind wanted to know the background of everything done in the office and this meant preparing memoranda and answering numerous questions. As a bachelor he was prepared to give up every hour of the day to official work. He brought with him a Private Secretary from the Inland Revenue for whom he provided accommodation in the Under Secretary's Lodge. So again one of the minor promotions to which I could have looked forward went to a stranger and not to the office staff.

That at least meant that one need not feel bound to remain in a Civilian post while others were joining up. So when matters began to settle down again to more normal routine in the office I asked myself whether trained as I had been as a Private in the Territorial Army in London (the Artists Rifles) followed by service in the Dublin University O.T.C., the time had not now come to follow two of my brothers (one a Civil Servant like myself, the other a medical student) into the Army

CHAPTER IV.

ADMIRALTY AND MINISTRY OF SHIPPING 1914-18.

(Extract only)

It was now approaching Christmas of the year 1914 and having had little leave in the year my wife and I intended to take ten days holiday at her home in Co. Fermanagh. On the first day of my leave we went by afternoon train to our destination. As we got off the train a telegram was handed to me. It was from the Under Secretary passing on a telegram which he had had from the Admiralty asking whether I could be lent to my old Department urgently: Sir Matthew had added that he was prepared to release me if I decided to accept the offer. Was this, rather than Army life, the way in which I should go?

And so the next morning I returned to Dublin and after an interview with the Under Secretary and saying goodbye to my colleagues I crossed to London the same night, leaving my wife to follow later. On 23rd December, 1914, I was back again in the

Transport Department of the Admiralty. I was not to leave it for four and a half years. My only link with the Chief Secretary's Office consisted in the receipt of my monthly salary cheque, to which on my promotion to an Acting Superintending Clerkship post in the Admiralty in January, 1915, an addition was made from Navy Votes.

.....

.....

CHAPTER V111.

CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE, DUBLIN 1919-21.

THE LAST DAYS OF DUBLIN CASTLE.

I came back to Dublin Castle realising that the scene there had been transformed since I left it four and a half years before. The Rising of 1916 had left its indelible mark, there had been the abortive Irish Convention, the successful anti-conscription campaign, Sinn Féin's sweeping victory at the Parliamentary Elections of December 1918. A few terrorist shootings had taken place but there was no organised body of men as yet under arms against British rule. What could a mere Civil Servant do? With the optimism of inexperience and the hopefulness of one who loved Ireland, I went back thinking in some vague way that perhaps it might be given to me to help in the task of reconciliation. I had now lived so long out of Ireland that I thought I could view the scene in a more detached spirit: religious differences in the tolerant atmosphere of England (where because I was an Irishman most of my fellow Civil Servants assumed that I was a Roman Catholic) had their outlines softened. But this attitude merely stressed the earlier feeling that the path of an Irish Civil Servant led through devious places into which the feet of his English confrere need never enter.

I found that I was cast for the role of

superintending Clerk in the Finance Division working to the Assistant Under Secretary Sir John Taylor on a type of work (finance) of which I was supremely ignorant, but my introduction to it was made easy by the unselfish help given to me by Joseph Brennan who had been keeping the post warm for me for the past year and now found himself superseded. Happily another opening was found for him in a short time. With Taylor I had had no previous official contact and had little opportunity of knowing him personally in my previous stay in the office owing to the water-tight compartment system then in vogue. I was soon to know him only too well. I recognised that he was working under considerable stress for in addition to finance he had a finger in most other pies in the office helping to shape Government policy in the growing chaotic state of the country. He was known to be a strong Conservative and an advocate of "firm" rule while he was serving political masters who had been given the cue to ride on an easy rein. The Under Secretary, James MacMahon, who had been brought from the Post Office, thus again depriving Taylor of his hopes of promotion, had become almost a figurehead at this juncture for being a Roman Catholic and a friend of some members of the Hierarchy he was regarded by Taylor as suspect, a person to be disregarded where questions of policy arose and policy affected not only the criminal law but matters of finance.

Taylor was hand in glove with the die-hard representative of the Treasury in Ireland, Maurice Headlam, the Treasury Remembrancer, who moved only in the best circles of the Kildare Street Club

where he found landed gentry who could provide him with facilities for fly-fishing on his week-ends. I foolishly thought that, when Departments put forward proposals for new financial expenditure, it was part of my duty to examine them on their merits, discuss them with the promoting Department and advise the Treasury of the views of the Chief Secretary. I was soon disillusioned. The document was merely to be copied and sent on with a covering letter "for consideration", or (even occasionally) for "favourable consideration" and nothing more and that was what I was paid for doing. The Treasury next returned this letter to the Treasury Remembrancer at the Castle attaching any relevant files and the latter then settled directly with Taylor what was to be the fate of the proposal: as both were cheese-parers and both were opposed to the policy of killing Home Rule by financial bribes there was little that got through the net. But even that was not sufficiently disappointing to an official who had learnt to take responsibility in the war years. Taylor had a fixed terminology in his letters: and would amend those that did not conform exactly to his stereotyped working. He might favour as an opening "With reference to your letter of the ... inst.," so out must come the wording "In reply to your letter". Every sentence in the simplest letter came under this verbal tomahawk: it was not sufficient to suggest that the letter was grammatical and its meaning plain. It must be scalped and in the process I too got hurt. Only second-sight could have helped me to know which particular wording would appeal to him. He objected

to my arranging that my assistant Brennan would share my room with me because in his view Brennan was suspect. He clearly wanted the office to be divided into two camps, the pro-Taylors and the pro-MacMahons and because I did not conform to type I came under his displeasure. It was the unhappiest twelve months of my Civil Service career, and I had come back with quixotic notions of serving my country. An error in certain complicated financial tables for which I was responsible was put almost in the same category as shooting a policeman. Matters reached such a stage that there was a veiled threat that I would be down-graded or otherwise disposed of. I hated to have to speak to him about anything and he bred in me a kind of nervous dread. I had little opportunity of acquainting the Under Secretary with the state of affairs: he himself was not very sure of his own ground and when at last in Taylor's absence on short leave I was able to unburden my soul a little he counselled patience: he obviously knew something of impending changes so I endured and made some enquiries about the possibility of a move to the new Ministry of Transport a branch of which was being established in Dublin.

I am writing frankly about this episode because it brought home to me that consideration to one's staff is the one virtue in a Civil Servant that covers a multitude of deficiencies in other directions. Apart from the more efficient work that is done in a "happy" office, it is not easy to estimate what harm may be done permanently to the morale of a suppressed and intimidated official, turning a cheerful and keen

man or woman into a dispirited and routine robot.

Some parts of an article published by me in Blackwood"s Magazine in August 1922 I would retract to-day for it was written too much from one side of the fence while my heart burned within me, but the sketches of outstanding Civil Servants in Dublin Castle of those two fateful years still seem to be so true that I would not alter a line. . Here is what I wrote of Sir John Taylor:

> "Cool, relentless, calculating - a man of narrow ideas but inflexible in carrying them out, a man whom Mr. Walter Long 'found' and who repaid that discovery with a strange unswerving devotion - this was the man whom an easy-going Under-Secretary had as his chief assistant, and an honest but blundering Viceroy came to regard as his guide, philosopher, and - we had almost said friend. But there were few who could find in the stern qualities of the Assistant Under-Secretary, Sir John Taylor, that fertile tilth on which the rich blossom of friendship grows. Had he been a leader of men - which he was not - he might have been a born general, - ruthless in carrying out a plan, finding his joy not in the victory, but in the fierce endeavour which led up to it.
>
> He was the last of those who, to the Ireland without, typified "Dublin Castle" for all time, - a machine, a car of Juggernaut that crushed the victims beneath its wheels, while in the temple within the lordly priests and the temple maidens - fair and sometimes frail, if the whispers of Dublin Society for the last hundred years are to be believed - made a jest of life. Not that Sir John cared aught for these things: his well-built figure and passionless face with cold blue eyes might be seen at levees, but his spirit was not there. Perhaps it roamed in the rose-garden where he toiled fiercely in his moments of relaxation, or in some wild mountain pass in the Wicklow hills whose glamour held something even for him in his early days. His ways were too abrupt for the finer shades of society: even amongst men there was something brooding and impetuous in his manner that rendered conversation difficult. The play of wit, the softer lights and tones of easy talk, were shattered in his presence. For his whole soul had gradually become possessed of a devil - the devil of work.

It was this devil that played the deuce with him. It wandered through waste places, seeking rest and finding none. It did not lead him into a mountain of vision from whence he might have seen the pitfalls that lay here and there, the winding ways that, if less direct, yet would have led more surely to the desired end, - the pacifying of a people. There was something Roman in this character. He drove his road straight on to the goal he had set. Had there been some engineer of wider outlook to guide the way, Sir John would have served him well. He would have hewn the rocks and cast down mountains into the morasses, but the finer work of examining the strata of the ground and guessing where some subterranean watercourse ran was beyond his schooling.

From the year 1919 he secured and held the reins. For this he had striven for years. In Mr. Walter Long's brief Chief Secretaryship, when still an official of junior rank, he had had the post of Under-Secretary within his grasp, but with the change of administration over-much political zeal - a damning characteristic for any servant of the State - had blasted his hopes and relegated him for ten years or more to comparative oblivion. In the year 1918 he had obtained the post of Assistant Under-Secretary.

From the very moment of his appointment Sir John set himself to seize the reins of power. Like the Turk, he could brook no brother near the throne. He had the art of making himself indispensable, or, at any rate to the uninitiated, of appearing to be so. And, indeed, he had qualifications which were possessed by only one other Castle official, - namely, an intimate knowledge of the mode of setting the Crimes Act machinery to work. That machinery had become rusted, but Sir John, with greasy waste and oil-can set himself to work to examine the joints of its harness. He coupled it up with the brand-new machinery of D.O.R.A., and evolved something which certainly moved, even though it might not move in the desired direction or marshal behind it an orderly series of ballast-waggons destined to set in order the permanent way.

But so inveterate in work was he that this activity was but one side of his functioning. He caught up every branch of office work - finance, crime, appointments. His remarkable accuracy and his retentive memory aided him in this, but the result was to crush out all sense of initiative in those whom he controlled. Other people's ideas were useless to him, for he was intolerant of any but his own. The slightest detail must be worked out according to his traditions; the slightest deviation into originality was regarded as an offence. His ultra-conservatism in politics was translated into action in his office administration.

> What was the result? The mind that should have bent itself solely to the task of envisaging the evergrowing problem of Sinn Féin was occupied with a mass of detail. The files of thirty years ago were searched through for light to deal with a fresh series of events. He failed to see that the agrarian troubles of those days were but a pale shadow of the spectre that was to haunt the island for years to come; that a wider vision was needed - bolder, not perhaps in the spirit of repression, but in the spirit of generosity. The Under-Secretary gave no lead; the Viceroy, Lord French, was by training unfitted to cope with the delicacy of the political situation; the Chief Secretary, Mr. Macpherson, took his colour from his advisers.
>
> Had these three characters been different, Sir John would never have attained to the importance he reached. He was the one man who knew his mind, who had a tradition inbred in him. Though he had no Northern blood in his veins, he was possessed of the spirit of the Ulsterman. He had made up his mind, and he went through with it - an admirable figure in many walks of life, the stuff from which martyrs are made and heroes of adversity created; but Moliere in his comedies has exposed the weakness of such, the tragedies to which such a temper may often give birth. Tempora mutantur, nos et in illis: if we change not, it is not our age but we who are shattered".

The Private Secretary to three Chief Secretaries in the war years had been the gentle, yet shrewd A.P. Magill who had been transferred from the Irish Land Commission. A great reader of nineteenth century English political history he preserved a philosophic, though not cynical, outlook on contemporary politics. He was the soul of discretion without cultivating those tight-lipped and self-important qualities which too often inhere in Minister's Private Secretaries - especially in England. Birrell must have found in him a congenial soul who could understand his Chief's deft literary touches and his detached and humourous outlook on political colleagues or opponents. But Magill himself never spoke unkindly of others. He was tolerant, full of understanding for human weaknesses, ready to play the role of a peacemaker. I got to know

him better in later years when we both had transferred to the Northern Ireland Government Service. By 1919 his Private Secretary's duties with Birrell's short-lived successors, Duke and Shortt, had ended and he was ensconced in the leisured post of Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks. The next Chief Secretary, Ian Macpherson, had assigned to him as Private Secretary Samuel Watt of the Local Government Board, a selection which was felt to be a slur on the officials of the Chief Secretary's Office, but our protests were unavailing. It was apparent that the recommendation of Sir Henry Robinson of the Local Government Board backed by Sir John Taylor had greater weight than any views held by the Under Secretary. Watt was an Ulsterman and presumably persona grata with the ultra Tories. Two of my colleagues who might have been regarded as eligible were Roman Catholics and therefore written off. I presumably was thought to have been too long out of touch with Irish affairs, owing to my four and a half years' absence in London and too much of an unknown factor.

The selection of Private Secretary to a Minister is somewhat of a problem because to some extent it is a Minister's personal choice and the Permanent Head of the Department can only suggest not insist. Sometimes a Minister transferred from one Ministerial post to another brings his former Private Secretary with him, sometimes an incoming Minister may be advised by the outgoing one to try a new Private Secretary, sometimes, and it is to be feared that in England this feature is becoming more marked to-day, a Minister may reject an official

proposed to him as Private Secretary because he feels that his past contacts are not likely to give him the appropriate political tinge - not too pronounced a colour but nicely shading into it. A Private Secretary established in a Minister's good graces is often in an advantageous position when promotion is going. A Minister has no yard stick for comparing him with colleagues in the same rank and regards him as a heaven-inspired being not to be judged by ordinary standards. A first-class Private Secretary is not always the best administrator, the most tactful handler of staff, the most successful worker in a team, but the Minister has decided and short of a complete deadlock or a first-class crisis his word must prevail. The only possible court of appeal by the head of a Department in such a case is one which may have influence but has no power, the Secretary of the Treasury in his mythical capacity as Head of the Civil Service. A strong Treasury Secretary has it is believed on occasion made and unmade Ministers. He can "break" a colleague in the Civil Service if he is convinced that public policy demands it, softening the blow by arranging relegation to a quiet backwater.

While I have thus been musing over Civil Service affairs, I have left the Irish world at a standstill. Ian Macpherson had introduced the Government of Ireland Bill in February, 1920, in a most cursory manner. He may have already known that his days as Chief Secretary were numbered, for despite the more rigorous measures for the suppression of political crime put in hand in the first three months of 1920, the policy of conciliation was gathering strength. In April 1920 Sir John Taylor found himself over-ruled

when the Viceroy released hunger-striking prisoners, and Macpherson was transferred to the Ministry of Pensions, his successor being Sir Hamar Greenwood. Taylor had been heavily overworked and seemingly it was suggested to him that this was an appropriate occasion to take some leave. From it he never returned, for in the month of May the Controlling Civil Service personnel at the Castle underwent a complete change. Rumours reached our ears that changes were impending but the actual details were kept secret. Some avant-couriers of the new regime appeared for a few days to spy out the land and then vanished. It was on the eve of Whitsuntide that all was known - Sir John Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, whom I had last known as Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping during my service there, was to be Joint Under Secretary with James McMahon, Alfred Cope was to replace Sir John Taylor as Assistant Under Secretary and the Treasury Remembrancer, Maurice Headlam was to disappear as Anderson was being given wide financial powers derived from the dual post that he was to hold that of an additional Secretary to the Treasury for purposes of Irish Finance. Headlam's chair was not left vacant but its occupant was to act as Anderson's Chief financial scrutineer, not as a Whitehall sleuth.

The choice fell on A.P. Waterfield, a Principal Assistant Secretary of the Treasury who after a few years of business life in London post-war now desired a return to the better charted waters of the Civil Service. In my closing years in Government Service I again met him in his capacity of Chairman of the British Civil Service Commission, a post which

he filled with great distinction, bringing to it not only an acute and lively intelligence and a critical faculty mellowed by the passing of time, but a sustained interest in the Ancient Classics as became one who has written the topical Latin prologue to the Westminster play.

In his "Irish Reminiscences" published in 1947 Headlam described his introduction to these sudden changes as follows:

> "I had a mysterious visit one day, unannounced, from Sir Warren Fisher, the new Secretary to the Treasury, and Sir John Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, who were apparently staying at the Shelbourne Hotel. They did not give any explanation of their visit, they admired the view from my window and talked generalities till, when they named some Irish official they were going to see, I warned them to be careful, as he was supposed to be a source of information to the Sinn Féiners: upon which they looked down their noses and one of them said I ought not to say such things. I had not met Fisher, though I knew that he had been Chalmers" private secretary at the Inland Revenue. Sir John Anderson, I am ashamed to say, I had never heard of. His subsequent career, probably the most distinguished of any civil servant's, shows that he must have possessed exceptional talents".

These remarks lead me to speak of those "Irish Reminiscences". In them Headlam openly discloses that during the passage of the Home Rule Bill and at other critical stages of the Government's Irish policy he consistently wrote to Members of Parliament expressing strong views against the line which the Government was taking. He defends himself by stating "I had decided that the ordinary Civil Service rules about taking part in politics did not apply in the Irish case, which was not politics but flagrant disloyalty to the Crown whose servant I was". Surely this is a most dangerous dictum. It is the duty of a Civil Servant to point out to his own Minister whither he thinks Government

policy is leading, but surely, if he finds that he can make no headway, it is not then open to him to lobby the opponents of the Government? Such a course of action can only breed distrust between Ministers, and their senior officials. Moreover it leaves a Civil Servant free to choose his loyalties, to determine himself the point at which it is open to him to use official knowledge to thwart the Government of the day. (He is the Servant of the Crown as represented by His Majesty's Ministers of the Government in power). If Headlam's views are accepted, then they can be equally used to justify the action of those Civil Service colleagues of Mr. Headlam who conveyed secret official information to their friends in the Sinn Féin party. Maurice Headlam was an English Conservative and a Treasury watchdog opposed to any change in Ireland and prepared to go to any lengths to retain the status quo. His book leaves a bad taste in the mouth of any ex-British Civil Servant, especially as it has been written not while his heart burned within him but in the dispassionate backward glance of twenty-seven years later.

There were in Sir John Anderson's train, a posse of Civil Servants from London offices - Alfred Cope formerly of the Customs and Excise and at this period an Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Pensions. On him was to fall the difficult task of harmonizing friction between police and military and between those quasi-military and too often sinister forces - Auxiliaries and Black and Tans, now to be recruited and given a Commander of their own - and everybody else, soldiers, police and civilians. He too was to try to

secure contact with the Republican leaders. Then came S.S. Whiskard, the unemotional pale-faced blue-eyed Englishman whose part it was to bring into the office the scientific outlook of the Home Office on crime; there was N.G. Loughnane of the Ministry of Pensions whose Irish antecedents were thought likely to make him a sympathetic Press Officer and there were juniors who were sent as spares to help in new developments. The infusion of new blood into the office brought back to me something of the atmosphere that I had known in the Ministry of Shipping.

I was spared from having to serve in any Branch concerned with the repressive measures which went hand in hand with a more liberal financial policy. In the re-organisation my post, on the financial side of the office, was regarded as a Principal, a promotion which I secured after twelve years in the Civil Service. To-day Assistant Principals feel that they have a grievance if not promoted after five years. I had now greater responsibility in using initiative and running my own branch. The work brought me into direct contact with Sir John Anderson and I learnt the brilliance of his intellect and the certainty of his judgment.

In addition to the everyday work that falls to a finance branch - the preparation of annual estimates and appropriation accounts and the supervision of those prepared by subordinate departments, the weighing-up of proposals for new expenditure and so forth, there were new problems to be handled arising out of the chaotic state of administration throughout the country.

Chief of these was how to find the money which ought to have been raised from the rates to meet decrees given by the Courts in favour of those, police or civilians or their dependants, who had suffered Criminal injuries in person or property. Most local authorities refused to strike a rate for the purpose, and the sources from which the Government decided to find the money were the various grants normally paid out of the Exchequer in aid of local rates. Financial machinery had to be devised, the bottom of every till scraped out and priorities settled. To assist the courts in determining the amounts to be paid it was necessary to supply them with the figures of salaries of Government officials maliciously killed in the discharge of their duties. One of those was Alan Bell, a Resident Magistrate, an inoffensive elderly gentleman, who had been marked down when it became known that he was attached to the "Crime Special" Branch of the Chief Secretary's Office, though as he returned unescorted to his home every day, his duties could not have been regarded officially as highly secret. I had to attend at Green Street Courthouse in Dublin to prove his salary and pension rights in due legal form. I did not feel any particular qualms in doing this. I did not think that I was likely to be warned off merely because I carried out a normal official task. I had never been in that Courthouse but when I entered it and was waiting my turn to give evidence I felt a sinister atmosphere about me, that there were men in that crowd whose passions were burning fiercely, that there was an underworld whose presence I now realised for the first time.

I did not trouble to mention this afterwards to anyone, but on the next occasion it was decided that a risk might exist and that evidence should be tendered by means of an official certificate without oral proof. Personally I never felt any fear of attack because of my official connection though I went backwards and forwards to my work daily from my home at Dundrum - five miles away - to the Castle. My only anxiety was to reach home before curfew hour - the danger after that was rather from the forces of the Crown. My heart beats did once quicken when on my way home I ran into a section of the I.R.A. drilling openly on a country road. I spent a Sunday once in the Dublin mountains with Bernard Gilbert, one of the Treasury officials assisting Waterfield, who later reached high eminence at the Treasury. I knew of course that in the mountains were men "on the run" in hiding but I lightly put that thought on one side. All the signs of Civil War that we saw that beautiful late autumn day were a single scouting aeroplane and in the distance what seemed like the smoke of a bivouac fire. When we returned to my home Gilbert - a fine mathematician and a brilliant pianist - sat down at the piano and held my wife and myself entranced with the beauty, the life, the sadness of the music of the Masters that he played for us.

His Chief Waterfield who had taken a house at Howth had an alarming experience when returning one night by car. He was held up by gunmen who fortunately failed to discover the confidential papers that he was carrying with him to work on at home, or more probably did not bother to make a thorough search when they realised that he was not the particular man they were

after. Two other officials who came across with Sir John Anderson and shared rooms together at Dundrum, found their quarters one night the centre of an attack on the local police barracks the other side of the road. With the reactions which their four years at the front in France made second nature, they took to the fields each with a service revolver and remained there till the firing ceased. But open spaces had no longer any attraction for them and the next day they took up residence within the Castle.

An example of the lack of imagination - or even commonsense - of the Military Intelligence system which now dominated the scene was shown by the issue to all officials at work in the Castle of passes carrying a photograph of the holder which had to be produced daily on passing in and out. It was a system admirably adapted to London offices in war-time, and set the seal of respectability on the holder. Applied to the totally different conditions in Ireland, it was a menace to those labelled in this way and was one of the chief causes for the shooting of an Army Officer in mufti captured by guerillas when taking a Sunday walk in the Dublin hills. Our passes were hurriedly recalled and it was left to the intelligence of police and sentries to decide whom to challenge at the Castle gates.

A large part of my duties at this time consisted in studying the legal effect of the financial clauses of the Government of Ireland Act and determining what action must be taken in readiness for the day when the Act would be put into operation, what legal instruments in the shape of Statutory

Rules must be prepared, what obscurities would have to be overcome by administrative subterfuges. It was work of far-reaching interest and gave one - as indeed all work in the Chief Secretary's Office did - a wide knowledge of many codes of law. I was given to help me in these researches Edward McCarron, an auditor in the Local Government Board, who subsequently became Secretary of that Department under the Government of the Irish Free State and had the distinction, which at times happens to officials in high places, of falling out with his Minister and being compulsorily retired. He had that mastery of detail and clarity of interpretation which goes with the legal mind that has handled administration, added to a gift of humour which it sometimes lacks.

There was a certain air of unreality about much of this work. Everyone seemed to believe that the Government of Ireland Act in its present form would never become law, that something would happen to prevent the partition of Ireland, and even though by the year 1921 an Assistant Under Secretary, (Sir Ernest Clark from the Inland Revenue) had been appointed with an office in Belfast to maintain contact with the shadow Cabinet of the Government to be in the North, the impression amongst us in the Castle (how far it was fostered by the attitude of Sir John Anderson I cannot say) was that our work was in the nature of an interesting exercise and no more.

It was during this period that I paid one of my few visits to the House of Commons. On St. Patrick's Day 1921, an office holiday, I received an urgent

message at my home where according to time-honoured Irish practice I was employed in planting early potatoes on the Saint's day, that the Irish Estimates were to be taken next day and that I was to cross to London that night. This was almost an unheard-of procedure in the history of the office as normally it was thought that the two officials stationed at the Irish office in London were quite competent to deal with any questions that might be raised. So the next day I was introduced for the first time to Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary, in his Minister's room at Westminster. To my surprise Lady Greenwood was also in attendance, while reclining full-length on a settee was Sir John Anderson in a negligent attitude, more concerned, I thought, with light (for him) conversation with her Ladyship than with weightier matters of State. From there I went to the officials' gallery in the House where I discovered that the last thing that interests the House is the estimates themselves, that they are merely there as a handle to debate "policy", and that as the debate proceeds it goes further and further away from any likelihood of Ministers requiring to know what the Estimates are all about. I also learnt that, at Westminster at any rate, political opponents are on the most easy terms with one another outside the House. For a division took place on the usual motion that the amount of the Estimate be reduced by a sum of ten pounds and as Asquith walked out of the House into the lobbies he found himself beside Sir Edward Carson and what do you think they said to one another or did they but scowl and pass silently by? Not at all for in the hearing of the officials' gallery Asquith clearly said to that

strangely enigmatic Irishman who may be remembered for his devoted championing of a Naval cadet (the "Winslow Boy" case) when all his tortuous politics are forgotten: "And how is the poor old Archdeacon's case getting on?" It was a reference to Carson's last big legal fight which he lost - the appeal of Archdeacon Wakeford from the Judgment of a Consistory Court which had found him guilty of behaviour in an obscure hotel of a kind more normally associated with the Divorce Courts than with Archdeacons.

From an official point of view I found the one and half years in the Chief Secretary's Office under the rule of Sir John Anderson exhilarating and something new was always being learnt. From the public standpoint they were to most Irishmen a nightmare. Traditional ways of thought were being shattered, the primitive law of reprisals had replaced justice, but all the time something was being shaped -

"All changed, changed utterly, a terrible beauty is born".

As one left the Castle one had a feeling of watchfulness. As I walked up Dame Street I have at times looked back with that sub-conscious sense of being followed - and by whom? The life of a Civil Servant in London seemed hum-drum when compared with this brooding sense of fatality, but I don't suppose many English Civil Servants would have wished to exchange places. When six months later I looked back at this time I saw in it not merely the closing scenes of a revolution but the culmination in Ireland of the reign of the Civil Servant. From 1919 to 1922 the

British Cabinet had only sketched in bare outline what was to be the policy in Ireland. They and the Chief Secretary were at Westminster. In the Castle was a succession of Civil Servants of outstanding personality determined to make an end of Irish unrest one way or another. It was they who filled in the picture, who decided what was to be its foreground and background, what figures sinister, commonplace or mystical were to fill the canvas. Sir John Taylor was one of these strong bureaucrats, but he disappeared. Sir John Anderson and Alfred Cope replaced him and they carried matters to the appointed end which was to extricate England from Ireland. They did not bring peace to Ireland for their orders were to stop short of complete autonomy, but at any rate England could wash her hands. This phenomenon of almost autocratic power in the hands of Civil Servants struck me so forcibly at the time that I was led in the Spring of 1922 to sketch their personalities while still fresh in my mind.

> The outstanding figure in the new regime was the Under-Secretary, Sir John Anderson. He did not, and as a civil servant necessarily could not, pose in the limelight to the same extent as his respected chief, but any one behind the scenes knew where the brain power lay. A signal example of the successful civil servant, he brought with him the experience of a variety of posts. It has for many years been the practice for Cabinet Ministers to be handed on from one post to another, striding like Colossi from place to place, seeking like Alexander new worlds to conquer, even though the one they have left behind may be lying in a sorry and half-finished state. In the last seven years the practice has extended to the Civil Service, a practice more justified in its case than in the case of ministerial offices, if judged by results. Sir John Anderson is one of the most striking examples. He is about forty-five years of age, and yet this graduate of Edinburgh University, after serving apprenticeship in the Colonial Office, has been in turn Secretary of the National Insurance Commission, of the Ministry of

Shipping, of the Local Government Board, and of the Ministry of Health, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and now Secretary of State to the Home Department. What posts remain for him to fill in the concluding twenty years of his official life it is difficult to guess, but that ambition will drive him to aim higher is certain.

Deep-set inscrutable eyes, barely visible while in thought, formed a mask to the whole countenance. Open, they looked at you with something of reserve, something of humour, touching up the impassiveness of the long dark face. In official life his manner had the touch of greatness in it - easy, gracious, but with something of condescension, as of one born to rule. Deliberate, yet swift in judgment, without superfluity, grasping with pith of the matter in a moment, he disclosed that remarkable versatility which enabled him to hold his own with men who had made a life-study of what he had first heard of but yesterday. What he lacked in knowledge of detail, he made up partly by intuition, partly by bluff, for he was sensitive to being in the wrong, or appearing uninformed. For this reason he was an adept in covering up his tracks if he made a false start or set out on a wrong trail, but he scorned the littleness that would make a scapegoat of a subordinate to save his own face.

> 'He nothing common did or mean
> Upon that memorable scene'.

He did not err in the way that Sir John Taylor erred - namely, in over-great attention to detail. Like a true general, he pointed out the offensive, he laid down the main principles, and left the rest to his subordinates, while he planned out the next move either to counter failure or develop success.

He had a mind of very great grasp and reach. Doubtless this was one reason for his selection for the post, for the Government knew that the cumbersome machinery of the Government of Ireland Act would need a deft organiser to set each several part in motion. Astonishment holds the mind how it ever came even partially to life at all, and we have all become Galileos and cry aloud, 'E pur si muove!'

He was a master of the English style. In these days of slipshod writing, an official letter drafted by the hand of Sir John Anderson could be set up as a model of clarity and terseness: without the jejuneness that marks the classic examples of red-tape without the complexity that makes Treasury circulars anathema to those who possess some remnants of right thinking.

No civil servant has ever wielded, or is ever again likely to wield, such power as he did during his twenty-one months of tenure of office as Under-Secretary, yet he kept an unbiassed mind throughout.

Inevitably it rendered him somewhat autocratic, not towards his inferiors, but towards his superiors or his equals in rank. He could yield but in his own way and at his own time. By sheer domination of character he could ruthlessly brush aside proposals or objections raised in high quarters. The power placed in his hands he wielded judiciously, though one might criticise his proneness to bargain. He would at times yield in a small point against his better judgment in order to gain a greater.

The new Assistant Under-Secretary, Mr. A.W. Cope, was a strange personality. A detective by his training in the Customs and by instinct, he seemed at first sight a curious choice for the post. But he was a man who revelled in work, who was never happier than when he held a dozen threads in his hand, and in the tangled web of Irish politic there were threads enough and to spare. Quick and impetuous in movement, the body revealed the mind, a fiery soul working out is way. A lean face, a large mouth, a ponderous jaw, hard eyes, and a capacious brow - at first glance there seemed something cruel and fierce, until a mischievous smile lit up his face, a ready laugh would ring out, and a gleam come across the eyes. It was somewhat of a revelation: work had crusted over the exterior, but there was something gentle within. He hated airs of self assumption, he hated intolerance, he breathed the spirit of a fighting democracy. His career in Ireland was a long struggle against militarism, which sought to impose itself more and more on the life of the country. He endeavoured by every means to keep that spirit out of the police, for militarism in a police force is a far more potential danger than in a disciplined army.

His besetting sin was his desire personally to do the work not only of a whole office but of the police and prisons' organisation, while simultaneously busying himself with wider issues of policy. As a result, the work in some directions was bound to suffer. His driving power was immense, but it dispersed itself in too many directions, and had a further disadvantage in that it weakened the sense of responsibility in subordinates. He never felt confidence that his orders would be carried out. Had he been less self-reliant, he would have won quicker sympathy. Yet those who knew him best say that he craved for sympathy, that he felt deeply the isolation in which he lived. Not that he was a recluse: his boyish temper could enter with zest into a hard set or rackets, or a game of vingt-et-un with high stakes, and he took an immense delight in a stage-like rehearsal of the swearing-in of the new Viceroy, in which as Clerk of the Council he played a leading role. These, however, were little oases in a life too devoted to work which he would often prolong through the whole night. How his physical frame and his brain stood the strain it is impossible to conceive. It was not ambition that drove him on, but restlessness. In his eyes there was no difficulty that could not be surmounted. A folding of the hands before an obstacle was to him the

highest sin. Obstructive tactics galvanised him into a veritable rage of activity. He had no respect for age or experience as such, if their views ran counter to his own. On occasions such as these his tone would become overbearing, his choice of language something not often heard in the passionless calm of Government offices. During such outbreaks there was only one course to be adopted, and that was not to use the soft answer that turneth away wrath, but to reply as aggressively as he. He bore no ill-will, he would apologise frankly, and turn his attention to the next comer".

The truce of June 1921 and the simultaneous opening of the First Parliament of Northern Ireland meant a speeding up of the arrangements for transferring to Belfast those functions of Government which were assigned by the Government of Ireland Act to the Irish administrations. No one believed that they would ever operate in the same shape in Dublin. For us Civil Servants the inevitable choice had to be made - were we to endeavour to be retained in the British Civil Service by securing transfer to some London Department or were we to acquiesce in being regarded as "Irish Officers" and so transferable to the new Governments in the North and South? My own inclination was to get back to London, much as I disliked the idea of permanent residence there, but two and a half years of nightmarish happenings in Ireland and my complete ignorance of Belfast did not make a Civil Service career in South or North seem very attractive. But Sir John Anderson's wisdom in this matter was unanswerable. He pointed out that someone from the Senior Staff in the Chief Secretary's Office must go to Belfast to help in the establishment of the administration there, that Joseph Brennan and myself had both experience of Finance and that as the former definitely wished to stay in Dublin it was inevitable that I should go to the Ministry of Finance in Belfast. The third Senior member of the

Staff, Martin Jones, whom I have already sketched, was an Englishman though all his service had been in Ireland and would naturally gravitate to the London Home Office, as he had no experience of Finance and the Ministry of Home Affairs in Belfast did not seem to want him, having already selected other Irish Officers for their chief posts. So after a visit to Belfast in order that I might be vetted by Sir Ernest Clark my official future was settled. My wife and I, to whom an infant daughter had been added, were again to pull up our roots and learn everything afresh - atmosphere, racial (I had almost written tribal) and political characteristics the impact of the business world on a new administration, the building up of a local state, the new acquaintances (or were they to be friends?) that one would make.

Before we left, my wife and I were entertained in the Castle by Sir John Anderson and his colleagues - no longer strictly immured there in fear of their lives. W.R. Matthews of the Irish Branch of the Treasury was also there. In his official and private life he more than made up for the greater incisiveness and self assurance of his brother Civil Servants from London by a philosophic outlook that took in all sides of the Irish imbroglio: he then imparted his views on official and political matters in a somewhat detached and humorous manner that gave a charm to his conversation. I can understand why a wider career opened to him, Secretary of the British Assistance Board and Treasury representative in Egypt in the 1939-45 War. His wife and mine supported one another in this otherwise masculine party from which the lighter graces were absent. I cannot say that it was wholly a cheerful

occasion. Sir John had other preoccupations on his mind for the internal political situation in Ireland was ominous. The pictures which an Office of Works Architect had selected to adorn the dining room walls seemed to add to the sombre effect. In lighter vein a few days afterwards we saw one another at the Gaiety Theatre where the Ulster Players were performing Rutherford Mayne's genial farce "Thompson in Tîr na nÓg" the story of the Belfast Orangeman who had got adrift among the fairies. It seemed to us that this would serve as an introduction to the life of the Ulsterman in which our lot was to be cast in future, but it wasn't quite like that in reality.

.....

Signed: G.C. Duggan

(G.C. Duggan)

Date: 19th February 1955

19th Feb. 1955