

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1285

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

THIRD STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,285

Witness

Colonel Eamon Broy,
13, Oaklands Drive,
Highfield Road,
Rathgar,
Dublin.

Identity.

I.R.A. Intelligence Agent,
Dublin Castle, 1917-'21.

Subject.

- (a) Further examples of I.R.A. Intelligence work;
- (b) His first meeting with Michael Collins.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. 9.735

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY COLONEL EAMON BROY,

13, Oaklands Drive, Highfield Road, Rathgar, Dublin.

I would like to add, by way of a postscript to my main statement, my recollections of some incidents which occurred during the period 1917 to 1921.

1917 - Example from Nihilists, Arsene Lupin and "The Rising of the Moon":

In March, 1917, when I commenced sending police documents to the Irish Volunteers, I had conceived the idea partly from what I read about the Russian Nihilists, partly from the Arsene Lupin French novels, and also from Lady Gregory's play "The Rising of the Moon". It may have been that I would have adopted the same course if I never had heard of any of those, but one never knows exactly how such ideas are conceived, whether consciously or subconsciously.

I read in some English magazine years before 1917 about the Russian Nihilists, who, in some southern Russian city, succeeded in getting their men into high positions in the Czarist police. There they learned all about secret correspondence, secret seals, codes, etc. Strange to say, when I met Michael Collins in January, 1919, and mentioned to him about that magazine, he told me that he, also, had read it.

In one of the Arsene Lupin novels, Lupin threatened that he would appear in the head police office at midnight on a certain night. The Chief of Police took all possible measures to prevent such an eventuality, and,

when midnight had just sounded, exclaimed: "Where now is Arsene Lupin?". "Here I am", said Lupin, who was dressed in police uniform and acting as special gendarme bodyguard to the Chief, having succeeded in entering the police headquarters in that disguise.

The play "The Rising of the Moon" also conveyed the same idea, and I foresaw the possibility of acting, as it were, in a highly modernised version of the R.I.C. Sergeant in that play. When I afterwards met Michael Collins and had many discussions with him on every topic under the sun, I asked him what he thought of "The Rising of the Moon". "The best play Lady Gregory ever wrote" was the reply.

R.I.C. very short of numbers in 1919 and early 1920.

Amongst the subjects Michael Collins and I discussed at our early meetings in 1919 was the R.I.C. force. I knew of very many R.I.C. members who joined the British Army in 1914 and that they had suffered great losses in killed, wounded, invalided or missing. Furthermore, all recruiting of that force was stopped from the commencement of the Great War in order not to compete in recruiting with the British Army. It struck me to ascertain what was the result of these two factors at the commencement of 1919. The following statistics revealed the position then: The R.I.C. strength in 1910 was 10,222 and this figure was at least 1,000 below the strength in eviction and coercion days. The strength in 1919 was 9,229 or 993 below the 1910 figures and very probably 2,000 less than in their heyday in the 19th century. Nor do these numbers give the full story of their weakness in 1919. As a result of the policy of non-recruitment from 1914 to 1919, except for

a small trickle of very inferior recruits, sons of policemen or other state servants, and no longer of full blooded Irishmen who formerly joined when Home Rule was looked on as a certainty, the R.I.C. had no members of from one to five years' service; and these would have been militarily the most suitable to engage in the struggle against the Irish Volunteers. Add to that the losses sustained during the 1914/1918 war, also of those best suited to combat the I.R.A., and it will be seen that the great all wise, all powerful R.I.C. was badly caught "on the wrong foot" when their hour of reckoning came in 1919. With the Irish Volunteers in existence everywhere, the R.I.C. could not adopt the old manoeuvre of transferring members temporarily from a quiet area to a disturbed district. There were now no quiet areas and all districts were disturbed. Furthermore, the shortage in strength precluded the existence of the former depot reserve of some 500 men.

Needless to say, Michael Collins was delighted to ascertain this state of affairs with the R.I.C., just at the moment when an Irish government and state were being established and the Volunteers were being given the task of defending the nation against British interference. I recommended him strongly not to mention the before-mentioned statistics to any Volunteers except to members of G.H.Q. staff and under no circumstances to put anything about them in writing. It may be taken that the R.I.C. headquarters was painfully aware of these figures, as they compiled the weekly strength figure as follows:

Strength at the beginning of the week 9,210, retirements for the week 20, recruits 3, net loss for the week 17, strength at the end of the week 9,193.

Should they learn that the Volunteers had ascertained the strength position, they would have been alarmed into taking such immediate action as, for example, calling on the British Army to take over some of the defence or similar duties being performed by the R.I.C. Furthermore, if they should learn that the Volunteers were interested in the strength figures, they would have been driven to realise that the Volunteers were far more formidable than they had expected and that they should at once be taken with the utmost seriousness. Accordingly, Collins, when discussing R.I.C. matters with Brigade Commandants and such other officers as were concerned, confined his discussions to the actual brigade area and to that alone.

Complete duplicate of R.I.C. file:

One night at Tommy Gay's Michael Collins showed me a complete R.I.C. secret file. I cannot now recollect what was the subject of this file, but the document recounted what was a damning admission of some form of villainy perpetrated by the R.I.C. It began with the report of the Sergeant of an R.I.C. station, in handwriting, partly in a crude and partly in "civil service" hand, with the word "secret" stamped on it. The report was submitted to the District Inspector of the area, who submitted the report to the County Inspector on headed official stationery, accompanied by his own comments in typewriting, and the inevitable stamped word "secret" was not omitted. This second "secret" endorsement was of a different size, shape and colour to that on the Sergeant's report, and was signed in the usual partly illegible signature of an officer and a gentleman. The County Inspector added his

own comments on his headed official paper, in typewriting, on an entirely different machine from that used in the District Inspector's minute. Again the "secret" stamp was used but dissimilar to those used previously on the file, and finished off by the usual semi illegible signature. Finally the complete file reached the Inspector General, who contributed a submission in handwriting to the Castle government, where the usual short minutes, comments and initials were added.

Michael asked me to read the whole file and say what I thought of it. I did so, and remarked that the document amounted to a damning admission of wrong-doing. He agreed, but requested me to read it again, regardless of the subject detailed thereon, and see if I could find anything unusual in the general make-up of the file. I stated that I could not discover anything extraordinary in the document, apart from the subject dealt with. Michael thereupon produced another R.I.C. file on the same subject which was a complete duplicate of the first, with direct typewriting and not carbon copies, straight from the ribbons of the different machines. All handwriting, whether in the Sergeant's report or in signatures or minutes on the margin or initials, was exactly similar in both files. So also were all rubber stamped "secret" endorsements and date stamps, exact copies in each case as to size, shape of letters and colour, even so far as to be at the same angles on the paper, and where these stamps were blurred, exactly the same blurring occurred in both cases.

The explanation was that the second file was the real R.I.C. document, which Collins intended to retain for

use in evidence against the British authorities at some suitable time, whilst the one he showed me first was completely faked and was to be returned to the R.I.C. archives through some of his "inside" friends, where it would never be discovered that it was counterfeited. Whoever made out the duplicate for Collins, who would obviously never have had sufficient spare time himself to do it, was surely a genius if ever there was one, and Michael had many such to call on when needed.

The reason he requested me to read the file was to make certain that there was no obvious flaw in the duplication, which he would expect me to detect on account of my years of experience in handling similar documents. He even got me to read the faked file a third time, after I had seen the original, in order to make absolutely certain that the fake was beyond detection.

Gloomy section of fours.

I remember one occasion about 7 p.m. I was ordered to type a secret report of many copies and take it at once to the Castle. One of the copies was for the Chief Commissioner, D.M.P., one for the Under Secretary, one for the military authorities, etc. As good luck would have it, I was due to meet Tommy Gay within minutes of completing the report, and thus I was enabled at once to give him a copy for Michael Collins. Afterwards I duly went to the Castle with the remaining copies and who should be waiting to receive it on behalf of the Commissioner but Joe Cavanagh. He examined the reports and asked me in a whisper if "the youth" had been sent a copy. I replied in the affirmative. (The "youth" was one of our mutual descriptions of Michael Collins).

Joe called me over in a low voice to look out through the window. I saw four persons walking up and down outside. They were Colonel Johnstone, Chief Commissioner, D.M.P., another, and the remaining two Joe told me were General Tudor and Major Carew. All four were endeavouring to take exercise inside the comparative safety of the lower Castle yard. Cavanagh exclaimed: "That must be the gloomiest section of fours that ever paraded in this Castle".

Colonel Johnstone had been at an earlier date a boxer and for years used to walk in to the Castle in the morning from his residence in Booterstown and, similarly, home in the evening. However, it dawned on him early in 1920 that this was no longer a healthy habit, and so he was compelled to take his exercises behind the Castle walls.

When one pondered from the historical standpoint the significance of the names of two members of this section of fours, namely Tudor and Carew - Carew and Tudor - two evil names in Irish history, one could feel that we were having that much satisfaction 1920, the humiliation of the bearers of two such vile names that had signified such disaster to the Irish people centuries before.

Precedence of Collins over British military.

At the Detective Office, No. 1 Great Brunswick St., on one occasion I remember I was preparing a secret report concerning British intelligence activity against the Irish Republican Army. In the usual way, I had made out seven carbon copies of this report, each copy, of course, being stamped "secret". Whilst I was thus occupied, Joe Cavanagh arrived from the Castle to collect the

multiple copies and meanwhile I was pondering as to whether I should send Michael Collins the third or fourth copy. The carbon copies, of course, gradually deteriorated the farther they were down from the first copy. The first copy always went to the Chief Commissioner, D.M.P., Colonel Johnstone, the second to the Under Secretary, Dublin Castle, and usually the third copy to the British military. I had made up my mind to send the fourth copy to Michael Collins. Cavanagh asked me which copy I intended to send to the "youth" (Michael Collins). I replied that I had decided to send the fourth copy. Joe, thereupon, entered on a facetious argument as to this. Collins was a military man and so were the British Army, but Collins was also a Minister so we finally gave Collins precedence and let him have the third copy.

Detective Sergeant Smith - great number of Detective Sergeants

Michael Collins was puzzled to read from the detective seniority list the large number of Sergeants, as compared with other ranks, in the detective force. If each Sergeant was to be sent on any form of duty accompanied by a proportionate number of the lower ranks of detective officers or detective constables, each Sergeant would have found himself in charge of about two men, if there were even that number per Sergeant. The reason of the disproportionate number of Sergeants, and the same was the case with Inspectors, was that even though a detective officer drew a greater amount of money per week, made up of pay and allowances, than did a Sergeant in the uniform service, still the detective officer had only the rank of constable so far as pension was concerned and in case of relegation to the uniformed service became

merely a constable, and this actually happened from time to time. Detective officers held their place in seniority amongst all the D.M.P. constables, and when their time came for promotion, if they had qualified for it by Civil Service literary examination and examination by a board in police duties, they were always offered promotion to the rank of Sergeant in the uniformed branch. Sometimes they accepted this promotion in order to secure the higher rank and higher pension and be on the safe side as far as their families were concerned. In order to prevent this loss of efficient detectives, the number of appointments for Sergeants was enormously increased in the G. Division. However, unlike in the case of the uniformed service, there was no Sergeants' separate mess in the G. Division and the unwritten law was that Detective Sergeants would not take advantage of their rank in reporting those of lower rank for minor disciplinary breaches. Only in case of serious breaches on duty in charge of a senior Sergeant would that Sergeant use his mythical "stripes" for disciplinary purposes.

Notwithstanding this arrangement, Detective Sergeant Smith reported two of the junior ranks for minor personal discipline and had them fined by the Chief Commissioner. For this breach of the unwritten code Smith was universally condemned, and the two members that he had reported never spoke to him again unless when compelled by the nature of their duties to do so..

Years after this, a prisoner escaped from Smith, and when he came into the mess-room in great tribulation one of these two men said to us: "There is not a laugh in Smith's body this minute"! Smith was most dangerous and insidious when he laughed, and he laughed often.

"Stop Press" in 1919.

On a Sunday afternoon in 1919 I visited the house of Tommy Gay at 8, Haddon Road, Clontarf. Tommy and Mrs. Gay were there and we were awaiting the arrival of Michael Collins. We were there to have a general talk and to relax, as there was no urgent matter to be dealt with, and there was no need for Michael to observe extreme punctuality in coming.

However, a good deal of time elapsed and still Michael did not put in an appearance. We were becoming somewhat anxious as there was always the possibility of his running into a patrol and getting arrested. Our fears were not allayed when we heard the words "Stop Press" being shouted on the sea road. Both Gay and I ran hatless, forgetting all our coolness, down Haddon Road, each quite regardless of the other's presence, and I am still not sure that Tommy did not beat me in the race. We each independently bought a "Stop Press". It turned out to be concerned with an aviator who had attempted to fly the Atlantic several days previously. He had been declared missing and believed lost, and the "Stop Press" announced that he had been picked up by a small vessel and was safe. What we had dreaded to read was "Michael Collins arrested"! In that case we would have had to take immediate steps to effect his release before he passed out of police custody. We had already worked out sound plans for releasing him from custody, either by ruse or by force.

A dozen British soldiers disarmed in Cork.

Michael Collins loved to tell a humorous story. The following was one of his favourite specimens.

About a dozen British soldiers under a Corporal were patrolling somewhere in Co. Cork. They were moving through a gap from a laneway when they were suddenly pounced on by a party of Cork Volunteers. All were disarmed in a twinkling except the Corporal, who held on

to his rifle and put up a terrific struggle. It took three of the Volunteers to wring the rifle out of his grasp and swing him into the ground. One of the Corkmen stooped over him and shouted: "You b...., I'll give you a shlap in the puss. Why didn't you give up the rifle at first?" The Corporal, gradually recovering from the severe shaking he had received and seeing his comrades being supplied with cigarettes, exclaimed: "Well Go' blimey, was that all you wanted? Why didn't you tell me? We were told we'd be murdered if we surrendered".

British always said they would "get" Michael Collins.

Bad and all as it was, it was better, if one had the choice, that Michael Collins should have been killed by Irishmen than by his British enemies. The British always boasted that, sooner or later, they would "get" Michael Collins. Their claim was that they had exiled Napoleon and General Cronje to St. Helena and had ousted Paul Kruger from his presidency of the Transvaal and the Kaiser from his throne, and so assuredly they would inevitably either kill or capture Michael Collins. We had definitely made up our minds that they would never succeed in doing either one or the other, so far as mortals could prevent it. We spared neither energy nor intelligence

Knocknagow Dairy, Parnell St., Dublin.

I had various means of making contact with, or sending messages to Michael Collins for the two years since meeting him at the house of Micheál Ó Foghludha, 5, Cabra Road, in January, 1919. I had the use of 5, Cabra Road and of the Foley Typewriting Office, Bachelor's Walk, for that purpose. I also had Seán

M. O'Duffy when he was in town. In fact, it was through Seán that I was put in touch with Tommy Gay and it was Seán who nominated Gay to act when he (Seán) had to go to the country. I used Gay's house, 8, Haddon Road, Clontarf, and the Municipal Library, Capel St., of which Tommy Gay was in control.

But the main liaison with Collins was supplied by Tommy Gay personally. I had appointments with him usually between 9 and 10 a.m., between 5 and 6 p.m., and frequently around 10 p.m. These meetings with him were generally held around the back of the Tivoli Theatre (now the Irish Press office) or near or at the back of Webb's bookshop on the Quays. Gay usually came and went by Butt Bridge or the Metal Bridge, and I myself very often approached Webb's via the Metal Bridge in order to shake off or dispose of anyone attempting to follow me.

Notwithstanding above-mentioned means of liaison, during the second half of 1920 I began to feel the need of more immediate contact with Michael Collins himself, if possible within half an hour, in cases where some dangerous situations were developing. Although I had usually been very lucky in acquiring urgent information just before one of the fixed appointments above referred to, the increasing pressure and tempo saw me acquiring such information, often a couple of hours before one of these fixed appointments. Accordingly, one night I informed Michael of this and asked him for some means of immediate personal contact with himself. In such cases it was not merely a question of conveying some item of information to him but of having a brief and urgent discussion as to the means, amongst other things, of meeting some serious

situation that had arisen. He said: "Very well, meet me here to-morrow night". I duly met him and he gave me the name of Mr. McMahon, Knocknagow Dairy, Parnell St., on the opposite side of the street to the shop of Maurice Collins.

Not very long afterwards I found it necessary to use this shop in order to have an immediate meeting with Collins. I had already "sized up" the position of this shop in order to be able to emerge into Parnell St. from a street approaching it at right angles and using Parnell St. to the minimum extent. This I did and duly arrived at the dairy, which was doing a busy trade over the counter in milk and milk products. Mr. McMahon had the high cheek bones of an Irishman, was about 40 years of age and had sandy or reddish hair, with a beautiful lustre on his hair that members of the Irish race seem to acquire when out of Ireland but never at home. He spoke with a rather pleasant silvery type of London accent and must have been at least a second generation Irishman. I was surprised to find Mr. McMahon by no means enthusiastic as I had expected a friend of Michael to be. Usually in such cases when people found that one was a friend of Michael and entitled to meet him, one received crushing iron handshakes from boys, women or men that were not remarkable for strength. However, Mr. McMahon agreed to send for Michael, who arrived in a matter of minutes, and I had met him within twenty minutes of setting out from Brunswick St. Although it was an appalling risk to send for Michael thus, and in the daylight, some time between 3 and 5 p.m., the matter to be discussed was even more desperate and did call for such a risk. What the topic was I have not now, unfortunately, the

slightest recollection. I endeavoured to pass the few minutes waiting for Michael and to distract attention from myself by drinking milk out of a vessel that was much too large, as Mr. McMahon appeared to be much agitated whilst giving me the milk. I forgot to pay for it and he forgot to ask for payment.

The following night I met Michael and he rubbed his hand over his mouth in the usual manner when something humorous was about to emerge. He said: "Did you see McMahon looking after you when you left the shop?". I said "No, I never looked back". "Well", he said, "he looked after you and shook his head, puzzled and exclaimed: "He looks like a "cop", but he's too light about the feet to be a "cop"".

Michael must have been on friendly terms with McMahon when in London and could have told him that I was "all right", but he loved a humorous situation like that and allowed McMahon to worry it out before explaining the situation to him. However, Michael must have had great reliance on McMahon to entrust him with such a dangerous task, and McMahon, notwithstanding his doubts, had means of finding Michael within a few minutes, and that at a time when Michael had many offices and was continually being obliged to flee from some of his offices owing to enemy raiders.

The fact that I always wore brown rubber gymnastic shoes may have given McMahon the impression of my being "light about the heels". These shoes permitted fast movement and at the same time one did not look "undressed" in such wear. From his shop I proceeded to establish my alibi, in case of my having been seen in the area, by

going to Seaver's, our fish merchant, and complaining about the quality of the fish, having previously arranged with our friend there, Tom Kelly, that my complaints would not be taken too seriously, as an official row might have led to dangerous inquiries as to why I should have complained at all and might have focussed suspicion on me.

I used McMahon's place on a good many occasions afterwards, when my 'cop'-like appearance no longer held any worries for Mr. McMahon. He had an almost miraculous means of always securing the presence of Collins in a matter of minutes, even when things were most dangerous.

Years afterwards, when all the wars were over, about 1924, I found myself in the neighbourhood of Parnell St. one day and decided to look up McMahon in order to indulge in reminiscences about Michael Collins and the times that were gone. I was astonished to find no trace whatever of the Knocknagow Dairy. When later on I enquired of several former members of the I.R.A. as to where McMahon had gone, not only did they not know, but not one of them had ever heard of him. It was not until a couple of years later that I found that he had become a publican and was located in the Fairview area. I had a few long talks with him about the past. Unfortunately, he died a couple of years afterwards.

Go ndeinidh Dia trócaire ar a h-anam!

British aeroplane force landed.

One of Michael Collins's collection of humorous stories was the following: A British airforce plane force-landed somewhere near the Limerick/Tipperary border. It was being guarded by some British tommies when an

attacking force of Volunteers arrived on the scene. The nearest British soldier shouted to his comrades: "Well, blimey, here comes Paddy with his gun". The British party surrendered without firing a shot and the Volunteers burned the aeroplane.

"Big Mike Collins".

An English newspaper in 1920 sent over a correspondent to Dublin to write a stage-Irish article on Sinn Féin and the Irish situation. The correspondent wrote that he had met an "extreme" Sinn Féiner. Apparently there were ordinary common or garden Sinn Féiners and also those of the "extreme" variety. According to this journalist, this "extreme" Sinn Féiner told him: "If yez don't clear out of this country Big Mike Collins 'll kill yez all"!

Mick procured the paper concerned and read the article for a few of us in his own inimitable whimsically humorous manner. Tommy Gay was listening and said: "Although your name is Michael, you're about the last man in the world to whom the stage-Irish "Big Mike" could apply. However, it is better that they should regard you as "Big Mike" than as what you really are. If that suits them it suits us too".

Collins dressed as a businessman.

I remember one morning about a quarter past nine I went to keep an appointment with Tommy Gay in the vicinity of Tara St. I was casually watching the traffic coming from the direction of Butt Bridge and going along Tara St. when who should I see but Michael Collins cycling in the stream of traffic. As I had not direct business in talking

to him at that precise moment, I did nothing to attract his attention. Such a proceeding, in any case, would have been risky in drawing attention to him and to myself. He did not notice me and passed on. He wore a high quality soft hat, dark grey suit, as usual, neatly shaved and with immaculate collar and tie, as always, seeming to be ready for the photographer. His bicycle was of first-class quality and fitted with a lamp and many other accessories. He looked like a bank clerk or stockbroker or "something in the city" and cycled on as if he owned the street.

Messrs. Alex Thom's as alibi.

The G. Division non-political section, by far the largest section, devoted its energies to the investigation of cases of burglary, housebreaking, sacrilege, larceny, embezzlement and allied forms of crime. The G. Division dealt with criminal cases from all over the Dublin Metropolitan area, as well as linking with cases coming from outside that area where criminals operated both within and without that territory.

When crimes occurred in, say, Rathmines or Blackrock, the local police exerted their best efforts to secure detections, but, however they dealt with these matters, all such cases were reported to the G. Division and every case was allocated to one or more detective, who worked with and without the efforts of the local police.

Detectives, working from their end, devoted special attention to pawn offices and jewellers' shops, as much stolen property found its way to these establishments sooner or later. Special detectives devoted all their time inspecting such shops, examining pawned property and

prosecuting offenders discovered by that means.

In order the better to discover stolen property in such places, all articles reported missing as a result of above-mentioned offences were listed each morning, with full descriptions, and sent to Messrs. Alex Thom to be printed the same day and distributed to pawnbrokers and jewellers that same afternoon. Consequently, such traders were left with no excuse if such property was afterwards found on their premises. Working at such short notice, naturally there were printers' errors from time to time. It was my duty to make out such lists every second morning, and, consequently, I found it necessary from time to time to go to the printers in order to complain about mistakes. I always managed to hold some mistakes in reserve and thus always had an excellent alibi ready when I needed to go out on some I.R.A. intelligence excursion. In case of suspicion of me, it would always be easy to establish that I had, in fact, visited the printer. My excuse to the printer always was the perfectly good one that it would be a good legal defence for a pawnbroker to claim that a printers' error prevented him from discovering stolen property pawned with him. One of the most noteworthy cases in which I used this alibi was the occasion when the police sought military aid to arrest Michael Collins and others in the Mansion House, as related elsewhere.

Mess duty use for alibis and contacts.

One member of the G. Division, as in all other D.M. Police stations, was allocated for a period to mess duty in addition to his other duties. The appointment was made by a majority vote of the single men residing in barracks and lasted in the G. Division for a period of two

and a half years and longer sometimes. Although this job used up a good deal of time, I entered for the job in 1918 and was duly elected. This job proved very handy for doing intelligence work, as it demanded at least a couple of visits each week to the various purveyors of food, either to order food or to pay for it, and could be used to make alibis by way of bogus complaints when I needed to leave the office on F.R.A. intelligence work.

Groceries were purchased at Messrs. Findlaters, George's St. The bookkeeper there was Miss Máire Smart, who held very strong Sinn Féin views. At the time this lady was engaged to be married to Micheál Ó Foghludha, who ran, and still runs, a typewriting office and who was, and is, a very strong nationalist. Miss Smart and I discussed national matters when I went each week to pay her for the groceries. We were of the same opinion, that force was the only means of securing national freedom and that, unfortunately, if the police allowed themselves to be used to impede the national struggle, force would have to be used against them, as no consideration whatsoever was as important as securing Ireland's independence. After some time when she learned my views she began to say that I would be the right sort of man to meet Michael Collins. Although his name was on the detective lists as a dangerous nationalist, I never paused at it, although I tried to judge the nationalist lists kept in the G. Division with a view of sizing up which of them would be the most efficient in case I made contact with one of them. The mention of Michael by this lady drew my attention to him for the first time. Miss Smart introduced me to her fiancé, Micheál Ó Foghludha, who also gave a hint about a possible meeting between Michael

Collins and myself. Later on Miss Smart put the question up to me straight - would I mind meeting Mick Collins? I told her I would have no hesitation whatever in meeting any genuine Irish nationalist.

All this time I was, as detailed elsewhere, sending political police reports through O'Hanrahan's shop to the Irish Volunteers, and simultaneous with the request of Miss Smart another request came through O'Hanrahan's, per Greg Murphy and Pat Tracey, asking me if I would mind meeting Mick Collins and where would I like to meet him. I elected to meet Collins at the house of Micheál Ó Foghludha, 5, Cabra Road, who meanwhile had been married to Miss Smart, and thus I had given an affirmative response to both parties. I duly met Michael Collins for the first time ever at 5, Cabra Road.

Fish for the mess was purchased from Messrs. Seavers, who had a shop in the neighbourhood of Green St. When Tommy Gay learned from me that I dealt with Seavers for fish, he informed me that he had a friend there, Tom Kelly, through whom I could always convey information to Volunteer headquarters if at any time I found a pressing need to utilise Mr. Kelly's services. In that capacity I found Mr. Kelly's services most useful on many occasions, but I found his services still more useful when I wanted an alibi for being in that neighbourhood at any time, as I could go to Seavers and complain about the quality of the fish supplied. There was always the danger that Messrs. Seavers would get tired of these unreasonable complaints and terminate the contract or refuse to renew it. In that case I would find myself in an awkward position with the Superintendent of the G.

Division, who would, naturally, enquire as to who had complained to me about the fish. So Tom Kelly had the job of diplomatically conveying to Messrs. Seavers that they need not take my complaints too seriously. Tom Kelly shared a deep interest with Tom and Mrs. Gay in camogie and was, I believe, a participant in the 1916 Rising.

I dealt with Mr. Byrne, 91, Camden St. for fresh meat and used that place also as an alibi when I needed to be in that vicinity on intelligence work. Mr. Byrne was an independent type of man and resented my complaints about the quality of his viands, so much so that on more than one occasion he conveyed to me that I was talking nonsense, that I did not know good meat when I saw it and that, in any case, he could do without my custom, and that when the contract terminated I could go elsewhere for supplies. He said he could always find purchasers for his wares, which were always of the best quality, and he did not believe in, and never practised, dealing with meat of inferior quality. Under the same name, the same business is still carried on at 91, Camden St.

During the same period Mr. Byrne had the usual vanman in such business. This vanman went to a Volunteer he knew and said: "Don't youse Volunteers want to shoot G. men?" On the Volunteer replying in the affirmative he said: "Well, there's one comes at 4 o'clock every Thursday to pay the ould lad I work for and there should not be much difficulty in shooting him". I was the man referred to. So, in due course, the matter reached the local Volunteer Intelligence Officer, thence the Battalion Commandant, probably the Brigadier, and finally, the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins himself, who

ordered: "No action without my prior sanction!"

Shortly after, when I met Michael, he rubbed his hand over his mouth, a sure sign of something that amused him, and said: "I see where you pay your butcher very promptly". Then he told me the whole story, which duly gratified his never failing love of anything humorous.

Names of detectives such as Neil MacFeely and Patrick Battrell.

Amongst the documents I sent via O'Hanrahan's shop, through the medium of Pat Tracey, was one giving the seniority list of detectives. Amongst them was Inspector Neil MacFeely. Tracey told me that when Harry O'Hanrahan came to that name he read it over again, saying: "Neil, Neil MacFeely. Why, the Gaelic League could not improve on that".

O'Hanrahan was also puzzled by the name of Detective Sergeant Patrick Battrell. When, later on, he was informed that Battrell was a native Irish speaker and a direct descendant of one of General Humbert's men who landed at Killala, he used some strong language. One thing, at least, could be said in Battrell's favour, that all his detective activities had been concerned solely with burglary, housebreaking and larceny.

Inspector MacFeely raids No. 6 Harcourt St.:

Inspector MacFeely was appointed to replace Inspector Love in charge of political duty. He was about the least efficient officer that could be allocated to such work, as he was a man completely without guile or ruse. He had been all his life a clerk, could do some "finger and thumb" typing, and frequently was given such duty as making maps of the scene of accidents, burglaries and

suchlike.

He was directed to take a party of detectives and raid No. 6, Harcourt St. He was instructed to arrest such people as Paddy O'Keeffe, Paddy Sheehan, but nobody told him to arrest Michael Collins as nobody believed that Michael would be so unwise as to work at such a well-known Sinn Féin rendezvous as No. 6. In due course MacFeely and his squad raided No. 6. His party carried out a complete raid on the ground floor, where many of those present were well-known to the detectives but not, as yet, to Inspector MacFeely. MacFeely wandered meanwhile upstairs and entered a room where Michael Collins was working. MacFeely did not know Collins and evidently believed he could not be of much importance if he had to work upstairs. Collins assumed that he was known to the Inspector and that he was about to be arrested. Consequently, he began to be abusive to MacFeely, who countered by saying that a lot of young lunatics were running the country and that having ruined the Irish Party the result would be that Ireland would get neither Home Rule nor anything else. MacFeely was a most militant sectarian type of Catholic Home Ruler and believed what he said. I do not know if MacFeely was ever a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, as were some members of the police, but he was certainly more Hibernian than most of the Hibernians. I had previously briefed Collins as to what he or any of his men should say to MacFeely if they ever met. Collins, accordingly, told MacFeely that by his activities against Sinn Féin he was sowing up disgrace for himself, his family and descendants for years to come.

There was a file of papers on the table in the room

and MacFeely took it up and began to read it. Collins, still believing that he was known to the Inspector and that he was certainly about to be arrested, seized the file from MacFeely's hands, tore it into shreds and threw it in the fire. He delivered a torrent of abuse to MacFeely, who left the room, scratching his head and seemingly much puzzled. Collins told me that he opened the door and saw a bunch of detectives downstairs, including what he called a pair of terrible looking "gutties" of detectives. This pair were not normally occupied on political duty and were, consequently, unknown to Collins. They were both big men, about sixteen stone weight each, and with red blotched faces. Hence the "gutty" reference. He asked me where on earth did we get detectives like that.

In any case, Collins disappeared upstairs and succeeded in evading arrest, although many Sinn Féin officials were taken.

Inspector MacFeely would not deign to have any general conversation with anyone so junior as I was. But MacFeely was a native of Donegal and would talk to a friend of his, who was also an Ulsterman and was a Detective Sergeant. This Sergeant was a friend of mine and we had many discussions on all topics. Out on a walk one night he informed me, in the same gloomy manner that a farmer would predict a week of snow, "MacFeely says there is going to be serious trouble. He met a very determined young man, a clerk, in 6, Harcourt St., and if they are all as extreme as he is there is plenty of trouble coming". I told this to Mick, making it "junior clerk". Mick was highly amused and Tommy Gay butted in: "Hee, hee, haw, haw, some junior clerk".

College Green shooting.

A shooting match took place, it must have been in the year 1919, at College Green, about midnight, between two armed members of the uniformed Dublin Metropolitan Police, who were on duty outside the Bank of Ireland, and a party of Volunteers. The Volunteers got the worst of the shooting and some were taken to hospital and detained there under a police guard.

I met Tommy Gay the following morning in the usual way and he was very angry with the police for the shooting and told me Mick was very angry and was going to make an example of these policemen. I used some strong language when I heard this, because, as related elsewhere, Mick and I decided that, if at all possible, the uniformed police would not be attacked merely because they were police. The majority of these men were not antagonistic to Sinn Féin and, in fact, a good many were favourable to the national struggle and had relatives in the movement. We believed that instead of antagonising them unnecessarily, it would be much better to secure their assistance later on, which, in fact, we did at a most critical time too. I told Gay most emphatically that nothing should be done about it until I saw Mick. When I did see him I found him still very angry. Some members of the police who visited the hospital where the wounded men were, remarked in the presence of the prisoners, pointing to one of them: "Hasn't he the eye of a?"

I told Mick that I knew both the D.M.P. men and that, in my opinion, neither of them would have attempted to hold up the Volunteers or start the shooting. They had no such instructions and were definitely not ambitious to become heroes. Furthermore, when policemen

like these go off duty at 6 a.m., if they have nothing to report they could go immediately to bed, but if something had happened they might be kept several hours making reports and would have to go out on duty again at 10 p.m. whether they had got any sleep at all or not.

I discussed this matter with a member of the uniformed police whom I could trust. His belief was that the Volunteers attacked or tried to disarm the policemen at College Green, as the police had no instructions as to disarming Volunteers. He said to me: "Look here, you know as well as I do that, except for a few "dirty idiots", the uniformed police don't give a damn if the Volunteers are taking home cannons along with them, but is there any necessity to turn round and point them at the police?". That was fair enough.

In the end I convinced Michael, and he remarked: "You're right. How did the other Volunteers who were at the meeting get home without any shooting or any interference by the police?".

So, no action was sanctioned by Volunteer headquarters, and that was very wise, because some of the uniformed police had a much better knowledge of Volunteer personnel and addresses in their local area than the G. Division ever had and could be very vindictive if aroused, and apart from the question of sympathy with Sinn Féin or not, the more troubled the times the easier became the life of the police, provided they were not attacked themselves, because excessive drill and excessive and tyrannical supervision by their officers became impossible in troubled times. "It'll give thems in the Castle something else to think about besides tyrannizing over us"!

Apparently the reason the policemen got the better of the shooting was that both spent most of their spare time in sporting gun shooting in Co. Dublin, and thus their eyes were "in". As they were very powerful men, the double action of a heavy Webley revolver must have felt to them to be as light as operating a nail scissors.

Main British propaganda contradicted by subsidizing propaganda.

During the second half of the year 1920 the Auxiliary force of the R.I.C. began to come into action against the I.R.A. In July, 1920, they numbered 500 and by 26th December of that year their strength was 1,227. British propaganda in Ireland lauded the new force to the skies. They were invincible; they were almost bullet proof, and the I.R.A. would never dare to attack or even face such redoubtable adversaries. The hangers on of Dublin Castle began to take new heart. They had found a trump card at last after having had to endure such a succession of disasters.

Just when this propaganda was at its height, on 28th November, 1920, a force of 18 Auxiliaries was annihilated at Kilmichael, near Macroom, in the Co. Cork. British propagandists alleged that, not satisfied with merely killing the Auxiliaries, the I.R.A. had then mutilated the bodies with axes. What really happened was that some of the Auxiliaries called out that they were prepared to surrender; and when the I.R.A. moved forward in order to accept the surrender the Auxiliaries again commenced firing and killed three Volunteers. The remaining Volunteers resumed firing and did not desist until the whole Auxiliary force was wiped out.

This axe propaganda thus contradicted the main propaganda. The Volunteers, who were alleged to be afraid of attacking such supermen according to the new propaganda, were in so little dread of antagonising the remaining 1,200 Auxiliaries that they used axes on the dead Auxiliaries. This secondary propaganda again made the hearts sink of all the friends and minions of Dublin Castle. It caused an immediate loss of all cocksureness amongst these human barometers.

Harry Boland.

Harry attended at one of our "high teas" at Gay's during a return visit from America. He was a hero worshipper of de Valera. He described life and his experiences in U.S.A. De Valera, with Harry and others, set out to advance the Irish Republican cause in the Southern states. A hostile paper in Washington referred to de Valera on the trip as a "Modern Jefferson Davis" heading a hopeless cause. The reference to Jefferson Davis, the beloved President of the Confederacy, awoke many Southerners to an interest in the Irish case and increased the size of meetings for de Valera when in "Dixieland", as a heart balm for their nostalgia for their lost cause.

Liam Mellows plays a joke on Harry Boland in U.S.A.

Mick Collins enjoyed this humorous story which some of the Irish delegates brought back from the United States. The Irish delegates in America and some of their American friends held a big function over there. De Valera and Judge Cohalan delivered heavy weighty speeches, followed by John Devoy, Diarmuid Lynch, Dr. Pat MacCartan,

Harry Boland and others.. When the turn of Liam Mellows came he delivered parodies on the speeches of those who preceded him. When he came to do Harry Boland he got ready to run. He made Harry say: "We collected five hundred thousand pounds for the loan in Dublin. We did. Be Jaysus we did". Mellows had to clear away by the fire escape.

Signed: Eamon Broy
 (Eamon Broy)

Date: 17th Nov 1955

17th Nov. 1955.

Witness: Mr F. Ryan Connell (M.F. Ryan) Comd't.
 (Investigator)

