

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1,767

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,767.

**Witness**

Seamus Reader,  
71, Pidgeon House Road,  
Coastguard Station,  
Ringsend,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

O/C, Scottish Brigade, 1920-

**Subject.**

I.R.B. & Irish Volunteer activities,  
Glasgow and Dublin, 1st Jan. 1916-30th Jan, 1916.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil.

File No S. 283.

Form B.S.M. 2

# ORIGINAL

~~SECRET~~ <sup>THIRD</sup> STATEMENT BY SEAMUS READER,

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
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71, Pigeon House Road, Ringsend, Dublin.

1st January, 1916:

On the 1st January, 1916, with Eamon Murray and Alec Carmichael, I arrived in Belfast from Glasgow with one portmanteau and two small cases containing 150 rounds of .303 and 200 rounds of assorted revolver ammunition, eight short .45 and eight .32 revolvers, 40 feet of strum or fuse, 200 detonators and one stone of explosives. Alec Carmichael remained in Belfast to hand over some of the stuff to Denis McCullough's mother or to Mr. Dempsey, and then return to Glasgow that night so that he would be at the Volunteer Company Parade in Ann St. and also that he would be at his employment on Monday morning, as he was engaged on British Admiralty war work. With Murray, I went on to Dublin with 10 revolvers, 100 rounds of rifle, 140 rounds of revolver ammunition, 100 detonators, 20 feet of fuse and 7 lbs. of explosives which were taken to Miss Leonard's, or Lennon's, shop at Rathmines Road, Dublin. The explosives, detonators and fuse were put in a small case to be delivered to the Ryans at Ballybough Road or to S. McGarry at Clonmore Road, Dublin. I told Miss Leonard that I had some private shopping to do and would be back again that night. With Murray I then went to Surrey House, Leinster Road, the residence of Countess Markievicz. where we met Andy Dunne of the Fianna. I told the Countess that I wanted to see James Connolly to deliver a message from Tom McGill of Glasgow. I told her that I had brought some material and might need assistance. She said she would keep Andy Dunne and Murray standing by until 10 p.m. and that Connolly would be there at 11 p.m.

I then went to Tom Clarke's shop to purchase, as arranged, Park Drive cigarettes. There I met Charles Corrigan who had just come out of Clarke's shop. After being in the shop for a few minutes, we went to 500, North Circular Road where we had tea. Charles Corrigan had been expecting Dan Braniff to be in Dublin but, so far, he had not turned up. I was brought into a dimly-lighted room where I gave a detailed report to Seán MacDermott and others. I was told to go back at once to Surrey House and give Connolly the dispatch or message, and if Connolly did not appear that night I was to tell the Countess that word was to be sent to Connolly. I was to leave the material where it was meantime and report back to Seán MacDermott at noon the following day. I then left for Surrey House and Charles Corrigan went part of the way with me. Corrigan said that if I had failed to arrive in Dublin on time, he was to be sent to Glasgow in connection with the billeting of I.R.B. and Volunteers in Dublin. I told him I understood that he was to arrange lodging for some of the Glasgow men in Navan and that he was staying at Cootehill.

2nd January:

On the following day, 2nd January, 1916, I called at 500, North Circular Road, Dublin, where I had an interview with Seán MacDermott. He questioned me about the possibilities in Scotland for the transporting of arms via Liverpool to Dublin. He said he was aware that The O'Rahilly of the Volunteers had made new contacts in England. I told him I knew that The O'Rahilly was in touch with John Carney of Govan, who was ex-Colonel of the Glasgow Regiment of the Irish National Volunteers, but that neither Captain Joe Robinson nor the Scottish I.R.B. Military Board had mentioned the matter to me, and that for the past few months

I had been crossing backwards and forwards to Ireland and thus had missed attending some meetings which had taken place while I was in Ireland. He said that should some rifles be procured in Glasgow, they intended to get them addressed to the Dublin Fruit Market, which would be arranged by Walter Cole. They would also need the assistance of the Dublin dockers, and that could be arranged through the influence of James Connolly. He said that because of the Annual General Meeting of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union to be held on the 9th January, 1916, Connolly was now attending an important executive committee meeting of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Mr. McDermott also said / He was endeavouring to get Connolly and some other members of the I.R.B. Military Council to a meeting early that evening, and that I should call to Cole's, Mountjoy Square, at tea time. He also said that while I was in Dublin I was not to call at the Volunteers' Headquarters or any of the Volunteer or Fianna halls or dances.

Shortly after 5 p.m. on the 2nd January, 1916, I went to Cole's house, Mountjoy Square, Dublin, where, while waiting in the kitchen for tea, I jotted my coded notes for my report to Scotland. I then went to the room where I met Tom Clarke, Seán MacDermott, J. Connolly, P. Pearse and McDonagh. Connolly was giving his opinion that general billeting in Ireland would not be successful as the position at General Headquarters of the Volunteers was bad because of the difference in opinion of the officers with regard to the Vols. in Ireland and the European War. Some believed that the Volunteers should be a defence force to protect Ireland against all enemies, foreign and domestic. With the news from Scotland, Connolly believed that after the arrests of extreme leaders a scheme would be devised in

the interest of Britain to utilize the Irish Volunteers and Ulster Volunteers and that a number of the present leaders would be discredited. MacDermott gave a brief summary of my statement and account of my activity since leaving Glasgow on the 31st December, 1915, with A. Carmichael and E. Murray. P. Pearse said that he would be presiding at the Central Executive of the Irish Volunteers on the 4th January, 1916, at Headquarters, Dawson St., where the business of reorganising and arming the Volunteers would be brought up by Tomás McDonagh. He said that the Central Council of the Irish Volunteers would be meeting at 12 noon on the Sunday of January 16th, 1916, and he would like, if it were possible, Capt. Joe Robinson and Pat McCullam or Tomás Ó Baun of Glasgow to be present and there they would discuss other matters concerning Irish Volunteers with E. O'Neill, Bulmer Hobson and The O'Rahilly.

The Report from Scotland was put by Connolly. It concerned the probability of Socialist and Nationalist papers being suppressed, the assets of the anti-Conscription and Free Speech Committee being seized under the Defence of the Realm Act, and a message from McGill to Connolly that there was likely to be a split in the National Socialist Party over the Munitions of War Act. Connolly said that Ireland could not wait until 1917 or 1918. John McLean expected to be arrested in January or February, as he intended demonstrating against war and Conscription. The workers should strike, and those who had guns should use them.

John McLean was arrested in February, 1916, and conveyed to Edinburgh Castle as a prisoner-of-war.

The report concerning the Volunteers in Ireland was put by MacDonagh (see New Ireland, 1917). The billeting of men from the I.R.B. Circles in Glasgow, Liverpool and London was discussed. I was to take orders back to Scotland for the sending over of A. Carmichael, (carpenter), B. Friel (plumber) and P. Morrin (slater) for Kimmage and St. Enda's, and also to remind Joe Robinson and T. McDonald of the special list for turners, fitters and miners experienced in the use of explosives.

Connolly made it known that Liberty Hall and Surrey House would be prepared for a state of siege from a given date, and recommended that all reliable Volunteer officers under MacDermott's jurisdiction should be given instructions to do the same and resist arrest as far too many of the Volunteer organisers were being arrested and deported. Seán MacDermott was just lately released from prison after serving a short term in 1915, but Connolly was referring to Monteith, Liam Mellowes, Ernest Blythe and others and to the Defence of the Realm Act Regulations, 1914, under which men were ordered to cease residing in or near the vicinity of a defended port or a proclaimed area. Some of the Volunteer and I.R.B. officers who later came under these regulations were Alfred Cotton, Terence MacSwiney, Denis McCullough and Seán McGarry. I was told that the next consignment of material was to be for Tobin's of Wellington Lane, unless otherwise ordered. I was also told I had been recommended by the Scottish Divisional Board of the I.R.B. as their military representative which demanded the utmost secrecy. After enquiring about my financial position, I was told to get back to Scotland as soon as possible. I agreed to leave Dublin next day. I then went back to Surrey House, had supper, did some coding and went to bed.

3rd January:

On the morning of the 3rd January, 1916, Connolly had a long talk with me at Surrey House. He enquired when I had seen Con Colbert and Capt. Seán Heuston of the Fianna. I told him that the last time I had met them was early in December, 1915, and that one or both of them were to be at Daly's in Limerick at Christmas, 1915. He told me that E. Murray would not be taking part in any more transactions with me in the work of the organisation (meaning the I.R.B.). He said he had recommended to Seán MacDermott that Captain Seumas Dempsey should work with me. He jokingly said that when the fight would start, he would endeavour to run it on Trade Union lines, and out of respect for my being a good Scotsman there would be no fighting on the Sabbath Day. He said that time was moving fast to the day when Ireland would have to assert herself against the menace of Conscription. I was given to understand by the talk that the Irish Citizen Army had no funds, and no source of getting any, and that Connolly had sold some of the I.C.A. material to the Military Council. He had heard of the Scottish Board collecting gold coins and about 300 rifles. I told him that because of my being rushed backward and forward to Ireland and Scotland I had no clear details but believed that Pat McCullam was responsible for dealing with the scheme for procuring the rifles. He told me to tell Robinson that some members of the organisation (I.R.B.) on the Volunteer Council were supporting the mark-time policy and were solely political. He said that within a day or two he would be going north to get reports and would send a communication to Glasgow for McGill within a few days. He wished me luck and hoped I would be stationed in Dublin or the North. I left Dublin in the afternoon for Belfast, where I took the boat for Ardrossan and train to Glasgow. When making my report in Glasgow, I learned that Seumas Dempsey had left Belfast for U.S.A.

4th January:

On the morning of the 4th January, 1916, I arrived in Glasgow. I went to Liam Gribbon's shop in the Saltmarket and left a message to be delivered to P. O'Neill (I.R.B.) I then went to Joe Robinson's home, where I stayed until he came home and I made my report to him from Dublin. I then went to A. Carmichael's home, where I stayed the night.

5th January:

On the 5th January, 1916, after receiving notice from Liam Gribbon, I attended an I.R.B. meeting at 7 o'clock in the Hall, London St., Glasgow. Present were Denis Canning, Tom McDonald, Pat O'Neill, Tom White, Pat McCallum, Phil Graham, Liam Oswald and J. Robinson. As my report from Dublin was most important, Tom White was instructed to take notes in case they were needed as minutes for the Divisional Board meeting of the Scottish I.R.B. Joe Robinson said he had received his report from me and would attend to all matters concerning 'A' Company, Glasgow Irish Volunteers. After my report, it was agreed to speed up activities in Scotland in the interest of the Military Council of the I.R.B. in Ireland. Liam Oswald said he would have reports from the Young Scots and the Clyde Revolutionary Party by Sunday, the 9th January, 1916. P. O'Neill said he would see that instructions would be sent to all Circles, that he would see Liam Gribbon that night late so that the instructions would be dealt with immediately. At the close of the meeting, P. O'Neill told me to hold myself in readiness as I might have to return to Ireland very soon, and that from now on, whenever possible, I would be attending Divisional Board meetings of the organisation in Scotland.



8th January:

On the 8th January, 1916, I presided at a meeting of Fianna officers in the Volunteer H.Q. Hall, Ann St., Glasgow, at 3 p.m. After the meeting, P. O'Neill, who was in the Hall, told me to attend an I.R.B. meeting the following morning, the 9th January, 1916, at 11 a.m. in the Sinn Féin Hall, London St., Glasgow. The business of the meeting concerned the transfer of youths over 14 years of age from the Willie Nelson Sluagh, which catered for young boys, to the Craobh Ruadh Sluagh which was for older boys. The meeting also discussed the question of those over 18 years of age and members of the Volunteers who could go to Ireland.

1916 - Jan. 9th.

On the 9th January, 1916, at 11 a.m., a Glasgow District Board meeting of the I.R.B. was held in London Street Hall. Reports were taken from the Circle Centres, regarding the collecting of munitions and the likelihood of men going over to Ireland.

Joe Robinson said that, as far as the Glasgow A. Company, Irish Volunteers, was concerned, he could not know until after the parade, which would be held that day at 3 p.m., how many men would be able to leave for Ireland soon.

Pat O'Neill said that Seumas McGollaghy of the Govan Circle had handed in about a quarter of a stone of explosives, an exploder and some detonators. He also had four .38 revolvers, two .32 revolvers and a small amount of ammunition. He said he would like to get the stuff across at once, as Seán and Seamus Rice were anxious to get to Dublin. He asked me if it were possible for me to go to Dublin on Saturday, 15th January, 1916, which I agreed to do.

As I had to go to Govan to collect munitions, Robinson said he would get in touch with me later, and let me know what transpired at the parade of A. Company, Irish Volunteers, when he was to prepare a list of men's names who were prepared to go to Ireland.

I know that the parade of A. Company did take place on the 9th January, 1916, in the Volunteer Headquarters Hall, Ann Street, Glasgow.

1916 - Jan. 13th - Thursday:

On the 13th January, 1916, at 6 p.m., on instructions from Liam Gribben, I called at Joe Robinson's house. Robinson enquired if I had booked my tickets for Dublin. On being told that I had not, he told me not to do so, as he had a number of men going across and they would be under my command, and that he would purchase the tickets at the last minute. He also said that it was not necessary for me to report back to O'Neill on the matter, and to be at Headquarters, Ann Street, on the following night, the 14th January, 1916.

1916 - Jan. 14th - Friday:

On the 14th January, 1916, at 7 p.m., I reported to Joe Robinson at Volunteer Headquarters Hall, Ann Street, Glasgow. He told me that he had summoned, for 8 p.m. in the Hall, a number of Volunteers, some of whom were prepared to go to Ireland on Saturday night with me. I told him that, in that case, I should be able to get very nearly a half-hundredweight of munitions across, and that I would notify O'Neill and Tom McDonald to that effect.

Robinson said that he wanted to make use of the men before they left Scotland, that Seumas McGollaghy, through his brother Seán, had access to the keys of an explosives magazine, that he intended to raid it, that, after 5 p.m., it would be dark, and that, with fast action, we could have a large amount of material and be out at sea before the British authorities would know anything had happened. I told him that there would

be some confusion in Dublin, and that I would have to change my transport sea route to Belfast instead of to Dublin, as the Dublin boat train left Glasgow, early, for Greenock, but the Belfast boat train left Glasgow for Ardrossan at a later time in the night.

It was agreed that Joe Robinson should interview the men that night, and that those who were willing to go on the raid would be mobilised for 3 p.m., Saturday, 15th, in the Hall. I was to see that about a dozen revolvers, some haversacks and kitbags would be in the Hall, and he was to see that a tin trunk and two travelling cases would be in the Hall, for sea transport, and that a number of Fianna members would be in the Hall to wait for the men returning from the raid.

1916 - Jan 15th - Saturday:

On Saturday, the 15th January, 1916, at 3 p.m., about a dozen Volunteers and a half-dozen Fianna Scouts met in the Volunteer Headquarters Hall, Ann Street, Glasgow. After four o'clock, the Scouts, who included Tom MacArlane and his brother, Frank Stack, Charles McKee, Frank May, and F. McKeever, were left in charge of the Hall, with instructions to have supper prepared for the raiding party, between eight and nine o'clock. A tin trunk and two travelling cases were put in the officers' quarters.

The Volunteers were supplied with haversacks and knapsacks, and some of them were given revolvers and short broad blade swords, to be used as jemmys or levers for prising open doors or windows. French cavalry swords, cut down, were suitable for this kind of work. The Volunteers then proceeded on their way, to raid the

Eadies pit magazine, Park View.

C. Turner, Frank Scullion, Seán Hegarty, under Joe Robinson, with Seumas McGollaghy as guide, left the city by tram-car. A. Carmichael, B. Friel, Seán Rice, Seumas Rice, Liam Gribben and Phil. Graham, under my command, proceeded on the next following tram-car, to the city terminus. When both parties met, they were split up, and converged on the magazine in patrols of two's and three's. As Seán McGollaghy had arranged an easy access, we were not long in procuring about one hundredweight of explosives and some hundreds of detonators, which we conveyed back to the Hall in Ann Street by the same route as we had left.

When we arrived back at the Hall, the material was put into the tin trunk and cases. Those of us who were going to Ireland had a clean-up, and ate some of the supper.

We then left the Hall and made our way to the Central Glasgow railway station, where we boarded the train for the Belfast boat at Ardrossan. Some of our luggage was put into the guard's van, and members of Glasgow Cumann na mBan and Volunteers gave us a hearty send-off, by throwing confetti on us, which drew away the suspicions of the Irish detectives at the station.

During this period, ships could not leave British ports without the consent of the British Admiralty, who were responsible for ship movements against German submarines. On the all-clear, we sailed for Belfast.

1916 - January 16th - Sunday:

On the morning of Sunday, 16th January, 1916, prior to the ship berthing at Belfast, I instructed the Volunteers aboard ship with me as to our behaviour and procedure while ashore in Belfast. I explained to them that, officially, I was expected to arrive at the North Wall, Dublin, that morning, and not in Belfast, that, owing to the new set of circumstances and on the instructions of Joe Robinson, we were now to land at Belfast, that there was a possibility that our friends might not be on the look-out for us at the Belfast docks, that, in the event of there being a delay in our getting ashore in Belfast, Sean and Seumas Rice would go to their pre-arranged lodgings in the city, that the remaining five of us would proceed to the Great Northern Railway station, to try and get the 9 a.m. train to Dublin, thus leaving no material in Belfast, but that, if we were ashore at Belfast too early, T. Scullion, C. Turner and myself would take a jannting car, with all the munitions, to McGlade's house, Falls Road, and that Sean and Seumas Rice, Sean Hegarty and Seumas McGollaghy would follow, with the personal luggage, in another car, or, if possible, a cab.

As we were allowed ashore early, we carried out the latter course. When we arrived at McGlade's house, we could not get admittance, and we were told by neighbours that the sisters McGlade had gone out to early Mass. As any delay in this quiet district might cause suspicion, I decided to proceed to the Belfast home of James Connolly and get in touch with the Belfast

Volunteer officers. On arriving at the house, we were received by Mrs. Connolly, her two daughters and son, Roddy. I apologised for our sudden arrival, and said we would leave as soon as possible.

We had been observed by Volunteer scouts as we went on our way through the city to McGlade's. One of the Dempsey's, I am not sure whether it was Paddy or Seumas, called on us at Connolly's, and told me that Denis McCullagh was out of town, and that it would be dangerous to go to the Fianna huts at Willowbank. He then went to Donnelly's for instructions and information. Sean Hegarty and Seumas McGollaghy went to the railway station, for information concerning trains to Dublin. Sean and Seumas Rice were told to fix themselves up in Belfast until they got instructions from Dublin. Later, the Rice's came back to the house, and told me that the next train for Dublin was in the afternoon, and that, when Sean Hegarty and Seumas McGollaghy arrived at the station, they learnt that a train was about to leave for Dublin and they boarded it.

From the information I got in Connolly's, I gathered that there was about to be some commotion. Some of them thought that the house was under observation by the R.I.C. and might be raided, so I was anxious to get clear of the city. I requested Ina Connolly and someone else to go out and get a car. Before leaving Belfast, we had to leave some of the material behind, a quarter of a stone of explosives, one exploder and a hundred detonators. The Rice's were instructed to leave their small arms

and ammunition in Belfast before going to Dublin.

Later, F. Scullion, C. Turner and myself left for Dublin on the 2.30 p.m. train. I tipped the porters well. They were under the impression that the luggage contained books and tools which was put into the guard's van.

At about 5.15 p.m. that evening, F. Scullion, C. Turner and myself arrived at Amiens Street railway station, Dublin. After waiting some time for some contact to get in touch with us, I hired a jaunting car to take us as far as North Frederick Street. On the way, we dropped F. Scullion, who was going to his home on the north side of the city. I told the jarvey that I was not sure of my destination as my friend, with whom I was going to stay, had failed to turn up at the station. We drove around the vicinity three times, but failed to locate Wellington Lane, of which I had only a hazy mental picture. After so much excitement since I had got my instructions on the 2nd January, 1916, from Sean McDermott, I felt at a loss, for the moment. The jarvey must have sensed something, for, on the third trip along North Frederick Street, he suggested getting the assistance of two policemen, who were standing at the corner of Abbey Presbyterian Church, North Frederick Street. Pressing the muzzle of my revolver against his hip, I told him to keep driving. He told me to keep calm, and that he would help me.

When we got to Dorset Street, the jarvey said that the Volunteers and the Countess had addressed meetings from his car. I believed him, and ordered him to take



us to Leinster Road, Rathmines, telling him that he would be well compensated. We halted at a corner, near Surrey House, and I proceeded alone to the house. I found that the lower window was wide open, and, when I got no reply to my knocking at the door, I shouted through this window. I knew that there was someone in the house, by the flickering shadow on the hall wall and the candle light in the kitchen. On entering the kitchen, I found Theo Fitzgerald there, helping himself to jam sandwiches. He was surprised to see me. I put him on his honour, as a member of the Fianna, and told him I wanted to know John Tobin's address at once, with as much secrecy as possible. As he knew the address, he returned with me to the car, and we all drove to Wellington Lane.

I halted the car at the entrance to the lane, and we unloaded our material. I paid the jarvey well. We got plenty of assistance from Tobin's house, from where most of the stuff was sent to St. Enda's college, the following morning, and, later, to Kimmage. I told J. Tobin that I would have to explain to James Connolly what had happened in Belfast, that I would stay that night in Surrey House, and that I would report to McDermott at 12 D'Olier Street on the following morning.

On arriving at Surrey House, which seemed to be crowded, the Countess realised that I was very tired, and ordered me to rest, stating that I could report to Connolly before going to McDermott in the morning.

1916 - Jan. 17th - Monday:

On the morning of the 17th January, 1916, at Surrey House, the Countess told me that James Connolly would have a talk with me that night, and that I should report to Seán MacDermott at once after breakfast. I went to D'Olier Street, where I gave a report to Seán MacDermott. He very much showed his appreciation of our success in getting the material to Dublin, and said that the capture of such an amount of high explosives by the British authorities would have ruined all their plans. He told me to report back to him at 5 p.m., as he had some contacts to make. When I returned to his office, Sean MacDermott told me that Seán Hegarty had called on him, and had reported that I and others had been under police observation in Belfast, and that he was doubtful if they would be able to get the stuff through to Dublin. MacDermott did not inform Sean Hegarty that we had already arrived in Dublin, and that the material had been safely disposed of. He told me to go back to Surrey House where I could talk to Connolly, but to no one else, about this matter. He also told me that he was not pleased with the Volunteer Central Council meeting, held on Sunday, 16th January, and gave me the impression that he was going to have a very important meeting with special individuals that night, and that he would contact me later. I then left for Surrey House.

On the night of the 17th January, 1916, at Surrey House, before going to bed, I had a long talk with James Connolly. He told me that, through the Transport Unions, they had now established quick lines of

communication between Glasgow and Dublin. This was to be carried out by the dockers on both sides, by seamen and cattle drovers. He said that the national leaders of Ireland were about to be faced with a crisis; as to how they would act, he had his doubts. I was telling him that Sean MacDermott had said that I could give him the Scottish report, but no one else, when the Countess and Michael Mallin entered the room. I gathered, from his remarks, that he had been in conference with Pearse and MacDermott, that they had discussed with him the reports of the Volunteer, Cumann na mBan and Fianna Eireann Conventions, held in 1915, and that there was a feeling, among the young minds in Dublin, that the older men were going to let them down. I thought that the points he was stressing to Mallin and the Countess were that there was a change in the I.R.B. Military Council, or about to be, and that he, Pearse and MacDermott were the Council that would formulate for action. In fact, I got the impression that, at any moment, we would find ourselves in defensive action, or spontaneous melees. Mallin wanted to know about the new Glasgow Fianna I.R.B. bomb. I told him that I had not heard of any, but that I knew that B. Friel and A. Carmichael had ideas on the subject, and that they should be arriving in Dublin any time now. Mallin said that he would try and arrange for me to meet Jim O'Neill and Seumas McGowan on Wednesday. I told him that I should like to meet them again, but that I could make no arrangements, as I was waiting on instructions. Connolly assured him of such, and the meeting ended.

1916 - Jan. 18th - Tuesday:

On the morning of the 18th January, 1916, I had another talk with James Connolly, before he left Surrey House to go to his office.

At nearly twelve noon, the Countess told me that a messenger had just left word that I was to go to Sean MacDermott's office between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. that day. Cormac Turner, who was also staying temporarily at Surrey House, but who had no part in the interview with Connolly and the others, had agreed with me that he should locate Sean Hegarty and Seumas McGolloghy, so that we could make a report to Sean MacDermott, and find out about the position of the billeting of men from Scotland and the finding of temporary employment for them until such time as they would be in action.

I discussed this matter later with Sean MacDermott. He said that Ireland would be forced into action at any moment, that events in England, and especially in Scotland, were moving fast, and that certain Irish and Irish-American transactions had got out of hand. He said he was sending two short statements to Scotland on the facts that I had been made aware of, and that I should be able to make the necessary explanations, and that, for that reason, he wanted me to go back to Scotland at once, to speed up affairs. He said it was important that Joe Robinson should get the men on the special list over to Dublin, as port controls would get tighter and my work more difficult. He also stated that it had been suggested that I should take instructions for Dungannon, on my way, but his opinion was that I

should go tomorrow, Wednesday, 19th January, from Dublin to Greenock, Glasgow. I agreed to do so. He gave me £5. (five pounds), two letters and eighteen Fianna badges for the men, to show when they came to Dublin. I then met Cormac Turner and S. Hegarty on the premises. S. Hegarty was pleased that my transactions were completed. He said he had promised Joe Robinson that he would let him know when we had arrived safely. I told him not to bother, as I would be in Scotland as soon as his postcard. I left them with S. MacDermott, and went back to Surrey House.

I learned afterwards that, later that night, or on the next morning, Wednesday, 19th January, S. Hegarty did send a telegram to No. 10 Robson's Street, Govanhill, Glasgow, stating, "Arrived safe and well", signed "Reader".

Before going to bed that night, I memorised my interview and coded some notes for my report in Scotland.

1916 - Jan. 19th - Wednesday:

On the 19th January (Wednesday), I rested all day in Surrey House, Dublin. In the afternoon, the Countess sent someone (I think Andy Dunne of the Dublin Fianna) to book my ticket for the boat to Glasgow, and that evening I left Dublin. Andy Dunne was constantly at Surrey House, as he was being tutored by the Countess in voice production and music. He was well known as a singer at Irish concerts in Dublin at that period.

I learned later (in the month of May 1916) from Joe Robinson that, while I was aboard ship, on my way

to Scotland, Joe Robinson's home at No. 10 Robson's Street, Govanhill, Glasgow, was searched at 11 p.m. on the 19th January, 1916. Found in the house was a telegram from Dublin, stating, "Arrived safe and well", signed, "Reader".

This telegram was sent by Sean Hegarty to Joe Robinson, unknown to me. Also found in the house, in a cabinet, were a .22 automatic pistol, some cartridges and a list of Dublin addresses. In Joe Robinson's pocket were found the keys of the Glasgow Irish Volunteer Headquarters Hall, 32 Ann Street. Joe Robinson was put under arrest in the early hours of Thursday, 20th January, at 12.15 a.m.

1916 - Jan. 20th - Thursday:

Thursday, 20th January, 1916, at 12.15 a.m., Joe Robinson was brought in custody by the Lanarkshire Police and two Royal Irish Constabulary officers, who were stationed in Glasgow, to the Glasgow Irish Volunteers Headquarters Hall, Ann Street, which they searched. In the officers' quarters of the Hall, papers relating to the Irish Volunteers were found. Some high explosives, and cartridges were also found. Robinson was then taken to prison, and detained.

On Thursday morning (20th Jan.), I arrived at Lieutenant A. Carmicheel's home at Argyle Street, Glasgow. When I entered the house, I took off my overcoat, and hung it on the back of a room door, taking my revolver and ammunition from the pockets and putting them in my jacket pockets where I also had two despatches. I then took my jacket off, and hung it

over the back of a chair. I then went into the kitchen.

Mrs. Carmichael said she was pleased that I had come, that she was in trouble. During a conversation, she began to cry, and said that her husband had gone out to work, but, before leaving the house, had told her that he had found explosives in Alex's (their son's) room, and that, if they were not removed by night time, either he or Alex would have to leave the house. I told Mrs. Carmichael not to worry, that Alex should not have had them in the house, and that I would take them away, after I had had a rest.

I was not long in the house, when Mrs. Carmichael answered a knock at the door. She was followed back into the kitchen by a man, claiming to be a tramcar inspector, and wishing to interview Seumas Reader regarding a tramcar accident in which his name was given as a witness. On being told that I could not be a witness to the accident mentioned, as I was not in the city at the time, he wanted to know where I was. I told him that I had just arrived from Dublin, that I knew he was not a tramcar inspector, that he was Sergeant Maguire, G. Division, Royal Irish Constabulary, operating in Glasgow. He said he had a detailed account of my movements for the past six months, and that I would have to make a statement on my recent visit to Ireland. He said that I left Glasgow on the 15th January, and while in Dublin, sent a telegram to Glasgow. I told him that I had not sent any telegram (which, of course, was quite true). I learned afterwards that it was Sean Hegarty who had sent the telegram in my

name, without my knowledge, by arrangement with Joe Robinson. The detective-sergeant then asked me where I had stayed while in Dublin. I told him I had lodged with my aunt, but, as she was ill and I did not want to have her annoyed, I therefore would not give him her address, as he would cause her home to be raided by the R.I.C. He then said he would have to search me, and asked for the jacket I wore in Dublin.

I then remembered that Mrs. Carmichael had told me about explosives being in the house, so I told the sergeant that I was responsible for all the explosives in the house, and I showed him Alex's bedroom. While he was looking for and examining the explosives, I went into the next bed-sittingroom where my jacket was hanging on the back of a chair. I lifted my jacket with my left hand, and was withdrawing with my other hand my revolver from the right-hand pocket of the jacket, when Mrs. Carmichael, seeing my action, grasped me in her arms - she was a strong, stoutly built woman - and shouted, "No killing in my house!"

At this point, I noticed Glasgow uniformed police running into the room where the detective-sergeant was searching. I struggled free from Mrs. Carmichael's grip, and threw my jacket under a concealed bed, the loaded revolver, two rounds of .32 ammunition and two despatches still in the pockets of the jacket. As I was moving towards the window, the police rushed in and seized me. The Irish detective-sergeant then entered, and told the police in the room to get me to the police station with all haste. He told me to take off my green Fianna tunic and Sam Browne belt. When handing them over, I told him that my



jacket and overcoat were hanging on the back of the room door. He searched them and gave them to me to put on. In the excitement, he did not notice that the jacket was too big for me, as it belonged to Alex Carmichael. I quickly covered it with my overcoat, and was then taken to Cranstonhill police station, to be charged and detained.

As I was being escorted to prison, Sean Gribbon, Quartermaster of A. Company, and members of the Friel family entered Mrs. Carmichael's house and secured my jacket. S. Gribbon kept and dealt with the despatches intended for Capt. Joe Robinson. He gave the I.R.B. despatches to Pat O'Neill, and the revolver to Miss Margaret Skinnider of Cumann na mBan, to keep for me, as it was a present to me from the Countess Markievicz in 1915. It was sent from England by The O'Rahilly to John Carney in Scotland who delivered it to me at his shop in Govan. When Tom White was going to Dublin at Easter, 1916, he had to dispose of it when trying to pass the pickets and barricades in Dublin during the fighting in Easter Week.

On the morning of the 20th January, 1916, after being brought into Cranstonhill police station, Glasgow, I was again searched, and it was only then that the old police station sergeant noticed that the jacket I was wearing did not fit me. When the police realised that they had been tricked, I was punched on the ear by the Irish detective, and then locked in a cell. They rushed off again to Carmichael's house to get my jacket, but were too late. As I have already stated, Sean Gribbon and Pat O'Neill had custody of its contents.

That evening, I was taken to a room in the Glasgow County Buildings for questioning by the Special Branch of the Police.

I think they must have realised that, owing to my sea journey and the excitement of my arrest, I was not in a fit state for interrogation. I was then taken to Uddingston police station and locked up for the night. Attempts were made to get a statement from me there, but I was too tired to be bothered.

1916 - Jan. 21st - Friday/ Saturday, Jan. 22nd:

On the morning of the 21st January, 1916, at Uddingston police station, I was again questioned by Sergeant Maguire of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Glasgow.

He told me that Joseph Robinson had been arrested on Wednesday night; that a number of names and addresses of my associates in Dublin, including a telegram, had been found on him, and that Robinson and myself would be brought before the Sheriff's court that morning, for a remand charge of stealing the high explosives.

I told him that I admitted being responsible for the explosives in Carmichael's house and assisting to convey ammunition to Ireland, that, as far as I was concerned, Joe Robinson was innocent, and that I resented the charge of theft.

He asked what I had done with my jacket which I had been wearing in Dublin. I told him that I had not a jacket, that I had worn an overcoat over my uniform tunic. He then asked why I had put on the

outside jacket in Carmichael's house. I said I was only doing what I was told, as one of the policemen had taken it from its hanger, searched it, and told me to put it on. I did so, on the assumption that I would need an extra coat to keep me warm in the cold cell, as he had taken my uniform tunic from me. He said he had done so, as it was to be used in evidence against me.

He agreed to my query that the Fianna Scouts and the Irish Volunteers were legal organisations.

I was now convinced and greatly relieved to know that they had not got my jacket, and that the despatches would be safe, as Mrs. Carmichael had seen my action that morning of my arrest.

He then started to give an imaginary routine of my movements prior to my arrest. I then admitted that I had left Glasgow on the 15th January, and had arrived in Dublin on the 16th January, for the purpose of arranging a summer camp and convention for the Fianna Scouts, in Dublin, that I had succeeded in arranging a camp for the Glasgow Scouts in July, and that Joe Robinson had previously agreed to run ceili and concerts, to raise funds to assist us in our fares, and other expenses.

I told him that, while on my way to Dublin, aboard ship, I got into conversation with two men, who, noticing my uniform, had said that they were taking material to Dublin, and might need my assistance, which I agreed to give. They were referred to as Pat and Mick, and I parted from them at Ormond Quay, Dublin. They were to meet me again, but did not do so. I did

not know their proper names, though I believed I could identify them again.

Some plain-clothes policemen were present at this stage, and I told them that the reason I did not give the Sergeant, on the morning of my arrest, my aunt's address, where I stayed in Dublin, was because she was ill, and a raid on her house might have meant her death.

I was asked did I know the Countess Markievicz very well. I said, "No, not very well", that I knew she was the President of the Fianna na Eireann, and she was doing a lot of good for the youth of Ireland. I was asked did I know the Fitzgerald's, house painters, of Dublin. I said I had met one of the boys at camp in the Dublin mountains, and had stayed at his home for one night in 1914.

I was then brought, under escort, to Hamilton Court building where, in a waiting room, I was interviewed by a man, whom I later learned was Mr. Orr, a solicitor. Being suspicious of all enquirers, I made much the same statement to him. I told him I did not need anyone to defend me. He told me he was defending Joe Robinson. I told him I believed Robinson was not guilty and, therefore, did not need to be defended.

When brought into the courtroom, there were a number of cases for hearing, and here I met Joe Robinson, for the first time since the 15th January. For the short period that we sat together in the court, I was able to convey to him that I was accepting part-responsibility, that he was to plead innocent, that I

believed the police had been side-tracked, that they had not got the Dublin despatches, and that fighting might break out in Ireland at any time. We were then brought before the court, and remanded in custody in Duke Street prison, Glasgow.

The following is a copy of an extract from "Nationality", dated 29th January, 1916:-

"ENEMY ACTIVITIES."

"A fortnight ago the enemy's R.I.C. arrested Captain Terence MacSwiney, the able organiser of the Co. Cork Volunteers, and Thomas Kent of the Castlelyons Company. Both have been lodged in Cork Jail. Up to the time of writing, no charge has been made against them.

Last week Captain Joseph Robinson, 1st Glasgow Co., was arrested at his home in Glasgow. The operation was carried out by six Glasgow detectives in charge of ex-R.I.C. man Harrington. Captain Robinson's house was searched at midnight, every picture was pulled off the walls, and the backs torn off in the search, and cupboards and corners were ransacked, but nothing except a revolver was discovered. Subsequently the houses of other Volunteers in Glasgow were visited and searched, and Captain Seamus Reader of the Fianna was arrested. Up to the time of going to press we have no information as to whether any charge is to be made against the Glasgow prisoners.

On Saturday night, Surrey House, the residence of Countess de Markievicz, of the Citizen Army, was

"visited by a body of the D.M.P., including men of the G. Division, and in the absence of the owner was searched. The only booty discovered was a small hand printing press, and this was taken to the Castle. Two or three other houses were visited and two rifles seized, also in the absence of the owners. The police report as supplied to the newspapers is altogether inaccurate and misleading.

We understand that the Irish Volunteers were informed of the raid as soon as Surrey House was reached by the enemy. Within half an hour two battalions of the Volunteers had been mobilised in anticipation of a general raid for arms. The men meant business, and had their services been required would have given a very good account of themselves."

The following is a copy of a report of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland (May 1916) which refers to my arrest on January 20, 1916:-

"Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland"

"Note on Cases of Unlawful Possession, and Larceny of High Explosives."

"(Produced by Sir Mathew Nathan.)"

"Lanarkshire (Scotland)."

"Between 2 p.m. on the 15th January and 8 a.m. on Sunday, 16th January, 1916, a colliery magazine was forced open, and 90 lbs. of Dynobel and 40 lbs. of Arkite stolen therefrom. Amongst a number of gun-powder packages strewn

"about the magazine was found a Trade Society Card, issued and signed by a Belfast man, and bearing the name of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ . He was known to the Royal Irish Constabulary at Glasgow as a Captain in the Irish Volunteers there, and a man holding very extreme views. The Lanarkshire police arrested him on the morning of the 20th January (12.15 a.m.) at his father's residence at Glasgow, on the charge of stealing the explosives above-mentioned.

None of the explosives was found in the house, but a signed telegram was observed lying on a table, handed in at Dublin and merely stating, "arrived safe and well". A loaded revolver and a number of cartridges, etc., were also found, and an envelope with a Dublin name and address. Some keys which he had in his possession, he stated, belonged to 34 Ann Street (The Irish Volunteer Drill Hall), and he was taken there, in custody, and the place searched. In a large box filled with papers relating to the Irish Volunteers found in a room in a house used as an office, six dynobel cartridges, portion of those stolen on the night of the 15th January, were discovered.

... Sergeant Maguire, Royal Irish Constabulary, Glasgow, ascertained that the signer of the telegram was an officer in the Sinn Fein Boy Scouts who resided at Glasgow, and on arriving there on the morning of the 20th (the same morning on which the

"Captain" was arrested) found that the Sinn Fein Boy Scout officer had just returned from Dublin. On being questioned by the Sergeant, he admitted that he left for Dublin via Belfast at 11 p.m. on the 15th January, along with two younger men, named \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . He further admitted that the "Captain" paid their fares to Dublin from the Volunteers' fund, for the purpose of attending the Convention of the Irish Volunteers on Sunday, 16th January, and they lodged whilst in Dublin at a house on East Ormond Quay. His landlady, who was present, said he had a small bag when setting out for Dublin, but this he denied. He then left the room, and went into another room, followed by the Sergeant who found, in the bottom of a box where he kept his clothes, a parcel containing ten dynobel cartridges (portion of those stolen) and a small cash box, fitted up with two dynobel cartridges, a piece of time fuse, a detonator, some soft cloth in layers, resembling lint, and one rifle cartridge - apparently intended for use as a bomb. Sergeant Maguire then sent for the police and requested them to arrest this Sinn Fein Boy Scout officer, for the larceny of the explosives and having them in his possession. A telegram, notifying the arrest of these two men and giving the names of the other persons implicated, was received in the Royal Irish Constabulary office at 6.30 p.m. on 20th January, and a copy was sent to Dublin Metropolitan Police on the same evening. The Sinn Fein Boy Scout officer subsequently stated to the police that he



"left for Dublin on the night of the 15th, he was accompanied by A., believed to reside at St. Andrew's Terrace, Dublin, and by B., address unknown, and that A. and B. carried explosives. He also stated that he lodged with C., a painter. A telegram giving this information was received in the Royal Irish Constabulary office at 10.45 p.m. on the 21st January, and a copy was sent to the Dublin Metropolitan police next morning.

Acting on warrant issued by the Competent Military Authority, Dublin, the police on the night of the 22nd January, 1916, searched a number of houses in Dublin for explosives, ammunition and other articles prejudicial to the Defence of the Realm. The premises searched were those of D., C., A., E. and F. All the persons named are connected with the Irish Volunteers and Sinn Fein Boy Scouts. The latter act very much under the guidance of D., and four of these boys, including E., were found at the residence of D. when the police entered there on the night of 22nd. Nothing in the nature of high explosives was found at any of the addresses, but some 950 .22 cartridges, a hand printing press and a quantity of anti-British literature were discovered at the residence of D. and seized by the police. It is believed that the explosives were removed from this house on information of arrest of the Captain and the Sinn Fein Boy Scout officer in Glasgow on 20th. Some rifles, etc., were found and seized in the house of C., and some cartridges in the house of E.

"Nothing of an incriminatory character was found at the residence of A. or F. The houses searched were entered almost simultaneously about 8 p.m., and the work finished before 11 p.m."

In the Royal Commissioners Report on the Rebellion in Ireland (May 1916), the following reference is made on page 18, 18th May, 1916:-

"562. (Questions put to the R.I.C.) - Have you I.R.B. Branches in Glasgow?

(Answer by the R.I.C.) - Probably there are members in Glasgow."

This proves that the R.I.C. had no real information about the I.R.B. in Scotland.

The following statement was made to the Commission on the 25th May, 1916, page 58, in reference to the Military Council of the I.R.B.:

"Emissaries of theirs stole high explosives near Glasgow, and brought them to Dublin."

This referred to my activity on behalf of the Military Council of the I.R.B.

At the Scottish I.R.B. inquiry into the participation of their members in the Rising in Dublin, Easter, 1916, and the case of Joe Robinson, held at Glasgow early in 1917, it was stated that, on the arrests of Joe Robinson and Seumas Reader on the 20th January, 1916, Sean Gribbon, Pat O'Neill and Pat McCullam, in conjunction with Tom McGill, acted immediately, with the

result that Connolly and MacDermott were made aware of the facts on the 21st January, 1916. Some hours before the Royal Irish Constabulary in Dublin were notified from Glasgow of fuller details, by their second telegram to Dublin at 10.45 p.m. on the night of the 21st January, 1916. MacDermott's despatches, which S. Reader had saved, were brought back to MacDermott, for confirmation and destruction. This was witnessed by L. Gribbon and Pat. McCallum, who stated that MacDermott was very pleased with the actions of S. Reader. He said he was convinced that there would be further arrests in Glasgow and Dublin. Connolly had already taken precautions since the 19th January when he received a message from Belfast that the authorities were supposed to have his home under observation. It had been reported to Connolly that the Clyde Workers' Committee were to discuss methods to stop conscription and to cause mutiny in the British Army, and that there were bound to be arrests under the Defence of the Realm Act.

1916 - Jan. 30th - Sunday:

John McLean, after having addressed a huge demonstration in Glasgow Green against war and conscription, on the Sunday, the 30th January, offered his services, if required, on behalf of the Irish-

prisoners in Glasgow, to Pat McCallum and Paddy McElroy of the I.R.B.

The Partick and Whiteinch Branch of the Young Scots League and the Scottish Home Rule Party made the same offer, through Eamonn McKay.

The Irish Prisoners' Committee of Glasgow supplied Robinson and me with food while we were detained in Duke Street prison as untried prisoners, and it was through this that I found out that there had been arrests of some of the Scottish Socialists, because, one morning, James Maxton, later M.P., had received my breakfast by mistake. The explanation was given by a warder. I also gathered from a prison passman, during my period of about fourteen weeks in Duke Street prison, that there was unrest in Glasgow and that there was intended revolt on the Clyde, which was to be crushed by the authorities. I learned of the arrests of Clyde workers, of the confiscation of the workers' paper, because of J. McLean's article - "A Desperate Situation" and "Should the Workers Arm?" - of the arrest of John McLean, his being detained in Edinburgh Castle and his being sentenced at the High Court, Edinburgh, to three years penal servitude on the 12th April 1916.

I was allowed one visitor per week, and received a number of visits from Una McKeown of the Glasgow Cumann na mBan, who conveyed to me the information that my bugle was being kept for me. As the bugle meant my revolver, it confirmed once again that my revolver and the despatches had been saved, and so put my mind, to a certain extent at ease.

But, one day, I received a visit from the Governor and head warder of the prison. They were accompanied by a man whom I presumed was a detective. The Governor addressed me, with his hands behind his back. He reminded me that I had made a statement to the police to the effect that I did not know the Countess Markievicz very well. I replied that that was so. He then handed me an open letter, stating that, if I did not know the Countess very well, I knew her dog very, very well. He said I could read the letter, but that it must be handed back to him.

The letter was addressed to me from the Countess. In it, she stated that I was missed in Dublin very much by puppet angel face (which was the name of her dog). She stated that she and my companions were proud of me, and that they sent their best wishes, and she, her love. I knew that her letter would be used against me, and I also knew that a fight was near at hand in Ireland. I paced my cell, with spasms of sadness and elation. I remember taking my aluminium hair-comb from the little shelf in the cell, breaking off one of the teeth, and writing on my cell wall a quotation from some unknown or forgotten source:-

"Ours is a cause that can never die.  
So, then, buckle on your belt of arms,  
And put aside your peace and rest.  
For the cause alone is worthy,  
And the good days bring the rest."

Some days later, I was given a scrubber and a pail of cold water, and told by a warder to get the writing off the wall at once, but the more I scrubbed,

the better it shone out. I don't remember how this incident ended. I was removed from that cell, and events for me began to speed up; by the nature of the activities around me, I sensed that the Rising, or major activities, had started in Ireland.

From January to April 1916, apart from Pat O'Neill and Tom White, it was Phil Graham, Liam Gribbon and Pat McCullam, working with Tom McGill, who got the information concerning Scotland to Connolly and Pearse.

This and early events prior to January and February, 1916, brought about the conditions which partly lead to the cause of the Rising in Dublin, Easter, 1916.

Signed: Seamus Reader

Date: 16/3/58

Witness: Seán Brennan Lieut. Col.  
(Investigator).

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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NO. W.S. 1,767