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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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No. W.S. ///

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 111

Witness

Denis McCullagh

Identity

Member of Supreme Council, I.R.B.

Subject

Comments on Bulmer Hobson's statement

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S.62

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

12 Oakley Road,
Ranelagh,
DUBLIN.

13th April, 1948.

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111,
Mr. M. McDunphy,
Bureau of Military History 1913 - 21,
26 Westland Row,
DUBLIN.



Dear Mr. McDunphy,

I received your letter of the 8th inst. and must confess I am thoroughly ashamed of my neglect to send you in some matter. The truth is that I have been very busy but probably my neglect is due more to indolence than otherwise. I have, however, prepared a sketchy statement of my connection with the I.R.B., from my earliest days in Belfast up to the date of the Rising. I propose to complete this in detail and send it in to you at the very earliest date. I will also write a personal history of my association with the Movement generally in Belfast and elsewhere during the period up to the Treaty, which might be useful when checked up with the other narratives that you have available.

I am grateful for the copy of Mr. Hobson's memos 1 and 2, which I have read carefully and with great interest. Generally, the first memo is accurate and sets out Mr. Hobson's personal connection with the I.R.B. I can only speak for his association with the organisation in Belfast in the earliest years, and am not too closely acquainted with his activities in Dublin and the later years, other than to say that after the Rising was decided on, I was deputed to tell Hobson that a Rising was inevitable, as he had been promulgating once or twice amongst the younger that that period was not Ireland's opportunity. I definitely informed Hobson of this, before my return to Belfast, after the meeting at which this decision was taken, and he undertook not to proceed further on the lines he had been following, in view of this decision, as I pointed out that divided counsels would only weaken any action taken, and as a responsible member of the organisation, he was bound to obedience.

Hobson states that he was inducted into the I.R.B. in 1904. I was of the opinion that it was much later than that date and certainly I had cleared out the older elements he refers to in his letter, before he was brought into the organisation. The Mr. Dempsey he refers to, on one or two occasions in his memorandum was about the last of these older members who remained, and partly because of his seniority that he was made Chairman.

/I also

I also think that Hobson does not give sufficient credit to Dr. Patrick McCartan for his contributions in articles to "Freedom". Hobson wrote many articles and they were not the least valuable ~~contributions~~ appearing in that paper.

My recollection of the method of financing the paper does not coincide with Hobson's. He suggests that it was financed by a monthly contribution of 1/- per member. My recollection is that it was financed entirely by the Supreme Council and not by person's subscriptions.

Outside the above points only, my recollections would be as good as Hobson's. His memo is reliable and accurate and can be taken generally as a history of his connection with the organisation. In his second memorandum, he gives a fairly accurate picture of his personal activities in the Movement.

I do not, of course, agree with his valuation of Griffith. The fact is that Hobson was a very headstrong and somewhat egotistical person, and being much younger than Griffith, the latter naturally resented Hobson's endeavouring to force his ~~our~~ opinions on Griffith and his friends. This naturally created a certain amount of friction between two strong personalities, but I must say that I never knew it to interfere with either of them, in any action that would be for the good or forwarding of the movement. The opinion of Griffith expressed by Hobson is purely a personal one which I share in no way, though Griffith treated me coldly, largely because of his differences with Hobson, with whom I was always closely associated, particularly in the formation of the Dungannon Clubs, of which I was Secretary, and the foundation and running of "The Republic", of which I was manager, as I also managed all the other Dungannon Club publications.

The two statements sent in by Mr. Hobson are fair and just representations of the very important part he played in national affairs, from the beginning of the century up to the Rising. He made a considerable contribution and though he parted from his friends before 1916, his work which was entirely unselfish, should not be forgotten.

I do not know whether you wish me to return the two copies of Mr. Hobson's memos, which you kindly sent me, but I will do so if required. In the meantime I would like to retain them, as they would supply me with a check as to dates etc., when I am compiling my own account, as Hobson kept a careful history of all happenings etc., chronologically, and can be largely relied upon as to dates.

Is mise,

J. J. Conroy