

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 250

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 250.....

Witness

Mr. William P. Corrigan,
3 St. Andrew St.,
Dublin.

Identity

Subject

- (a) Took part in Rising Easter Week 1916 -
South Dublin Union;
- (b) Arrangements for meeting of Arthur Griffith
And Sir John Anderson, British Under Sec.
in offices of Corrigan and Corrigan, Solicitors.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No.S.378.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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I have been interviewed by Commandant Barry regarding any matters of historical importance which came to my knowledge during the years 1916 to 1921.

In the year 1916 I took part in the Insurrection being in the South Dublin Union where I was taken Prisoner and after some days was brought before Court Martial. Before going into the room in which the Court Martial took place I was seen by Mr. W. E. Wylie K.C. (afterwards Judge Wylie) who was acting as Prosecutor, he having a Commission and being attached to Dublin University O.T.C. We were both surprised to see each other in our respective capacities. He said to me "Remember, if you do not consider you are being fairly treated you can call on me". Nothing occurred during my trial excepting a Sergeant who had given evidence in my case wished to amend his evidence. Before he was allowed to do so Mr. Wylie stated to him "You have finished your evidence and you cannot add to or take from it unless it is in favour of the prisoner" and the sergeant was not allowed to give any further evidence. I understand from some of the other prisoners that Mr. Wylie adopted a strict course with all the witnesses of the Crown.

Sometime afterwards, towards the end of 1920 the British Local Government Board had made demands on the Joint Committee of the Grangegorman Mental Hospital, then known as the Richmond and Portrane Asylum for their books for audit purposes which the Joint Committee refused having previously sworn allegiance to Dail Aireann. The Local Government Board then refused to grant aid. My firm acted as legal advisers to the Asylum Joint committee and having been consulted by the chairman (the late Mrs. Jennie Wyse Power) of the Committee regarding the raising of money on the deeds of the property of the Asylum. She stated that they had no money to feed the inmates for more than a day or two. I approached the Bank of Ireland for an advance on the security of the deeds and this was refused unless the consent of the Local Government Board was obtained. I then consulted Mr. Wylie

(who usually advised the Joint Committee) at his own residence late one evening. In the course of the discussion I pointed out that if the Committee could not raise the money without the consent of the Local Government Board the Committee would have no alternative but to open the gates and release some 400 inmates. Mr. Wylie stated "this will be a nice town to live in with Black and Tans, I.R.A. and lunatics abroad" He then asked me "what are you fellows fighting for" and following a discussion about this he then said it was a pity that something could not be done to bring the two sides together. He asked me would Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins meet a British Representative. He suggested Sir John Anderson the General Permanent under Secretary in Dublin Castle as the British Representative and I agreed to make some enquiries and let Mr. Wylie know the result of same. I interviewed Arthur Griffith in the Bailey restaurant and told him of my conversation with Mr. Wylie. He stated that he would not be in favour of Michael Collins meeting any representative as his appearance was not known to the British but he thought if Collins was agreeable, he, Griffith, who was well known to the Authorities would be agreeable to meet the British Representative. After Griffith had consulted Collins he informed me that he was willing to meet a British Representative and I got in touch with Mr. Wylie and informed him and it was agreed that the meeting should take place in my office on the following Sunday (from my recollection this was the Sunday after the shooting of Lynch in the Exchequer Hotel) I undertook to guarantee the safe conduct of Sir John Anderson and Mr. Wylie gave a similar undertaking with regard to Griffith. The two men came to my office on the Sunday as arranged. One took the front office and the other the back office and Mr. Wylie and myself acted as intermediaries between them. I do not think the two men actually met during the course of the proceedings, but, I think these were the first steps towards peace negotiations.

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D. Corrigan
5 May 1949