

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 418

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 418

Witness

Mrs. Austin Stack,

Seabank,

strand Road, Merrion, Dublin.

Identity

Widow of Austin Stack

Subject

Her husband's national activities 1917-1921,
covering -

(a) Hunger Strikes;

(b) Peace negotiations, 1920-1921.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.1274

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

SECOND STATEMENT OF MRS. AUSTIN STACK,

Seabank, Strand Road, Merrion, Dublin

HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 418

After Austin's release from Dartmoor, via Lewes Jail, 17th June, 1917, he was accompanied home to Tralee by his friend and countyman, Thomas Ashe. The mountain peaks of Kerry from Brandon to Millstreet were illuminated by beacons to bid them welcome. Each part of the county vied in its efforts to show the joy felt at their home-coming.

In August, 1917, he was arrested, under the Defence of the Realm Act, on the steps of the Liberal Club, Day Place, Tralee, on a charge of drilling Volunteers, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He was removed to Mountjoy, and there became the leader of the hunger strike which the authorities tried to break by resorting to forcible feeding. It began in this manner. The prisoners were treated as criminals and compelled to consort with them. On Monday, 17th September, Austin was brought before the Governor, and sentenced to deprivation of good conduct marks and loss of secular reading for the offence of talking in the wood yard where they worked. He arranged they should all go in a body to the Deputy Governor, Mr. John Boland, and put forward demands to receive political or prisoner of war treatment. Mr. Boland instantly turned down such a request and treated it with contempt. Previous to their interview with the Deputy Governor, Austin had, after consultation with the others, decided to give Mr. Boland the opportunity of communicating with his authorities, the Prisons Board. If that body ignored their demands, he had

decided on hunger striking on October 1st. On Monday, September 17th, and on Tuesday, 18th, they got their usual exercise after breakfast and dinner, but on Wednesday, 19th, they got no exercise in the afternoon, and all the prisoners started ringing their bells. Shortly afterwards the prisoners were transferred to another part of the prison.

Next morning, Thursday, 20th, they got no exercise before or after breakfast. The bell-ringing commenced again, the warders retaliated by tying up the bells, and the prisoners by hammering on the doors with their boots. Thereupon, the warders entered each cell, three per cell, removed bed, bedding, furniture and the prisoner's boots by force. The men were left to sleep or sit on the floor without covering, save what they had on them. This precipitated the hunger strike which then commenced on Thursday, 20th September, with the refusal of dinner. Now such action was not without precedent to the authorities, as the Suffragettes had had recourse to it and been forcibly fed and released under the famous Cat and Mouse Act, and re-arrested several times, but it was completely novel in the men's case. The authorities at once decided to apply forcible feeding. As there were forty men who undertook to hunger strike, coming from different parts of the country, it spoke volumes for Austin's personality that they should have followed his lead in this matter, as he had practically no opportunity for consultation or addressing them other than his orders given from the obscurity of his cell. He

appointed a Committee to act with him. It consisted of Patrick Brennan, Joseph McDonagh, Thomas Ashe and Michael Travers.

Consultation with the Committee was almost impossible, owing to their solitary confinement. Such conversations as took place had to be held going to Mass, and to the operation room where they were about to be forcibly fed. The authorities, sensing leadership in him, and influence in others, had some of them removed to the basement cells on Saturday, where he and they remained until the visit of the Lord Mayor on Saturday who drew attention to their condition. They were removed back to their cells, plus bed and bedding on Tuesday, after the collapse of Thomas Ashe. Austin was first fed by Dr. Cooke on Saturday afternoon, without medical examination, and same was continued on Sunday, Monday, and on Tuesday he was fed with difficulty by Dr. Lowe. On Tuesday, Thomas Ashe died in the Mater Hospital where he was removed some hours after being fed.

On Wednesday, Austin was questioned by Dr. Dowdall about his health, and refused to answer, as the doctor in question was aware of their deprivation of bedding whilst on hunger strike, and their removal to the basement cells. By this time Austin and most, if not all, of the prisoners knew of Ashe's death, but the authorities continued to feed them forcibly. Friday was the first day the feeding tubes (of which there were four amongst forty men) were sterilized.

On Saturday morning, 29th September, Austin was interviewed by the Lord Mayor, the Chaplain and Sir John Keane, Chairman of the Visiting Committee, and he got from the Lord Mayor the first indication that their demands would be conceded. Later that night, the Lord Mayor returned and told him the Government had granted all demands. Austin read the paper by the light of the warder's taper, and immediately decided it was too general. He said, until it was printed in black and white, they would remain on hunger strike. The Lord Mayor said he would himself guarantee all their demands, and asked him to accept his word as the Lord Mayor of Dublin. This he agreed to do, after consultation with the remaining members of the Committee, Patrick Brennan and Michael Travers. Poor Ashe was dead, and Joseph McDonagh in hospital after a serious collapse whilst in the punishment cell. These new regulations did not come into force until the Friday following, after they had threatened another hunger strike.

The Regulations were as follows:-

Issued officially by an order in council for the treatment of Irish prisoners convicted under D.O.R.A.

They are kept apart from other classes of prisoners.

They are exempt from bath on reception.

May be searched only by an officer specially appointed for the purpose.

May be placed in a special room or cell.

May be allowed, on payment of usual rate per day, to occupy special room or cell.

May be allowed, at their own request, the use of furniture, etc..

On payment of the usual rate, they may be allowed to have the assistance of some person appointed by the Governor to relieve all of them from the performance of any unaccustomed tasks.

They are allowed to get food from outside, and to wear their own clothes, and are exempted from hair-cutting and shaving.

They are further allowed, at their own expense, books, newspapers or other means of occupation, other than those furnished by the prison, as are not, in the opinion of the Governor, of an objectionable kind.

They are also exempt from the obligations of work, and are permitted visits, while they are allowed to write one letter each day and receive letters.

They are also allowed to receive visits in a place different from that in which other prisoners receive visits.

Shortly after the strike was over, the prisoners were transferred to Dundalk, where, in November, Austin led

another hunger strike, which resulted in the prisoners' release.

In November, 1917, Sinn Féin held their Ard Fheis, and elected Austin as Secretary, and about the same time he was elected on the Volunteer Executive. On his release from jail, there was much work awaiting him, and he spent the time between 6, Harcourt Street and the Volunteer Executive.

In April, 1918, he was again arrested in College Green under the Cat and Mouse Act, and was sent to Belfast Jail where, in June, he again incited a hunger strike for political rights. Scarcely was this matter settled than a very bad attack of influenza broke out amongst the prisoners, one hundred and eleven of whom were stricken with it. Seventeen of the men were removed to hospital, and the remaining ninety-four had to remain in their cells, there being no further room in the hospital for them. The conditions in the cells were pretty bad, and Austin, who was Commandant, had numerous interviews with the Governor about the prisoners' health - all to no purpose. Letters he endeavoured to send to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, reminding him of the promises made to him by the authorities on the treatment of prisoners, were not allowed out.

On Saturday, 29th November, he got a message to see John Doran, a prisoner awaiting trial in D. Wing, and arranged to sit next to him at Mass on Sunday. From what he told him, he believed the authorities intended to treat him as a

criminal, when tried. Austin suggested getting him to their wing after trial and before sentence. This was the cause of the Mutiny in Belfast Jail. I quote his own account:

About Saturday, 29th November, got message to see John Doran awaiting trial in "D" Wing. On Sunday sat next Doran at Mass and chatted with him. From what he told me, I believed the authorities would try to treat him as a criminal when tried. Told Doran this, and suggested getting him to our wing in prison after trial and before sentence.

Doran tried on 21st December.

On Sunday, 22nd, sat next Doran at Mass, and told him to turn into B.Wing as he left the Chapel. Several of our men went with him and got him into "B" safely. Kept all doors closed, and prevented search. I was sent for by Governor who began interview by saying: "I believe you captured a prisoner this morning". I said: "Yes". I told him Doran should be a political prisoner, instanced the case of Derrig, Ketterick and Murray, who had been taken away from Belfast Prison and treated as criminals, although the Governor had recommended them for political treatment. I offered to give up Doran if I got a guarantee that he would be sent with us after sentence. I offered anyway to produce him to military for purpose of having

sentence promulgated. The Governor pointed out seriousness of situation which I admitted, and I told him we were prepared to lose lives to establish the principle that we were the judges as to who were, or who were not political prisoners. On his saying he would have to report the matter to the Board, the interview closed.

I refused Dep. Chief Warder Willis who wished to see Doran for purposes of "check". We put on guards all day and at night.

On Monday, 23rd, guards. Put up barricades Monday night. About midnight, Governor held up by guards and explained he only wished to see Warder in kitchen, to which place he was escorted by our guard. He then retired.

Tuesday 24th, interview with Fr. MacCauley. He suggested an armistice - coming from the Governor - so as to allow the warders to do their duty for the present. I agreed to this, provided I got twelve hours' notice before military or police brought in. Chaplain saw Governor again, and returned saying this was agreed to. Guards taken off then. This was about mid-day. One barricade taken down temporarily. Doran came out after dinner and exercised with us in yard. Cell next mine, C.3/12, fitted up for Doran.

Wednesday (Xmas Day), Doran messed with Blythe, Lynch, McMahan and Hoolan in my cell.

All passes off well. The boys held dance and concert. Christmas night announced as "Victory Ball".

Thursday, 26th, uneventful.

Friday, 27th, got notice through Father MacCauley of withdrawal of Governor's undertaking. I enquired whether this was the stipulated twelve hours' notice and was told it was. Hour, 1.30 p.m. Attack might open any time after 1.30 a.m. tomorrow. After dinner men went on A.2 and A.3 and sang and cheered, and afterwards ascended roof of laundry and planted the tricolour on chimney. Large crowds attracted and gathered in Crumlin Road. Prisoners sang and cheered for about one-and-a-half hours. The mob outside then began to throw stones. Vice-Commandant signalled to men to come off the roof, which they did.

Barricades re-erected and strengthened, also new barricades on stairs in B.Wing, and a part of stairs cut away. Guards on all night.

Saturday, 28th, breakfast had to be brought up by means of an improvised "lift", owing to condition of stairs. About 11.30 a.m., heard that Commissioner of Police in the prison, and that police were to lock us up. Ordered all doors to be "sprung" off hinges at once. This was done. All men in yard and laundry and men belonging to A.1 Wards brought on to B.2 and B.3. Some of the hospital patients with us. The others were cut off. Arrived outside B. gate, but could not gain admittance.

Chaplain comes on scene and administers General Absolution. All the men join in a great cheer when I have said: "Now, boys, we're ready".

All hands set to work at once to throw down iron railings on B.2 and B.3. As parts of railings fall on ground floor with heavy noise from time to time, great cheers arise from the prisoners. A few men sent up into attic to "attend to" the roof, and we hear slates falling in fine style. In less than half-an-hour, the whole place is a scene of wreckage. The fallen ceilings, with wire netting, are lying along the whole ground floor (which the railings have broken through) and, on the stairway, form a regular masterpiece of defence work. The landings, B.2 and B.3, are now only narrow ledges, and dangerous for any attacking party.

Soon after mid-day, or perhaps before, am approached by Fr. [no name on original - most likely McCauley] who informs me that the military have come to prison, and he suggests that we might now reconsider our position, having done so much, (I took it he meant giving up Doran) but I said: "Let them come". I felt sorry for him. He looked so anxious.

The military and police now take up positions in the circle on the ground floor and around B.Wing, outside our barricades. There seem to be a lot of military in C.Wing. Expecting attack all day and during the Saturday night. None comes, however.

About 11 p.m., we have supper. Prior to this, men prevented from cooking. Food supply consists of Christmas parcels, and must be conserved. About midnight, concert held at end window of B.3. During concert we hear general elections results from men in hospital who shout across to us. First news was Dillon's smashing defeat in East Mayo. Great demonstration. Sunday morning (29th) we hear Mass on ledges of corridors behind barricades [Marginal Note: "We get most of the results and they put us in better form than ever".]

Interview with Fr. MacCauley at B.1 gate, and later with Fr. Mageegan. Men on guard all the time behind barricades. Military and police on duty at other side of same. It is evidently the intention now to starve us out. We call in all the food. Every man gives up his parcels and everything else in the way of eatables in his possession. We also put in a water supply lest the supply be cut off. The food is rationed - two small meals per man per day. "Concert" about midnight as usual. Half the men ordered to bed, others remain on duty for several hours. Those who have rested then take turns on guard.

Monday, 30th, gas and water cut off. (The heating had been discontinued from the beginning). Interview with Fr. MacCauley. He comes up into B.2, and sees all the men. Attack not come off

so far. It looks as if they hope to exhaust us soon, but we have food enough to do us, by rationing, for three or four more days at least. Guards as usual, and resting by turns. I had told the priest we would burn everything burnable in the place if gas and water not restored. They are restored soon after. Concert, etc., at midnight.

Tuesday, 31st, Fr. MacCauley arrives with Lord Mayor of Belfast (Sir J. Johnson). Priest goes upstairs while I discuss matters with Lord Mayor. I offer to give up Doran if assurance given that he will be given political treatment. I refuse to accept promise that the case will receive best consideration of the Chief Secretary.

At about 6 p.m., Most Rev. Dr. McRory and the Lord Mayor of Dublin arrived, Fr. MacCauley soon after. We have a long discussion. The Lord Mayor of Dublin is prepared to give promise that Doran will be made a political prisoner after sentence. He hands me Mr. Shortt's letter, which says he "will consider any representations made to me regarding his (Doran's) case", if we surrender. The Lord Mayor pledges himself that, underlying the Chief Secretary's statement, there is an unofficial undertaking. I express myself satisfied with this, and raise the point that we must not be punished, and must get back to our former status, doors open all day and night, etc..

Dr. McRory and Lord Mayor go away to see if they can phone Mr. Shortt about this. Lord Mayor also assured me we are to be removed to internment camp (at Oldcastle, probably). They return later. The authorities will only consent to giving us the pre-influenza conditions. I demur, but Dr. McRory tells me of probable bloodshed if matter not arranged tonight. I call officers and M.P's. together. We agree to accept terms pending removal to Internment Camp.

All officers, etc., then meet the Bishop and Lord Mayor, and we inform them of our agreement. The question arises of a possible effort to punish us for wrecking prison, and Lord Mayor can give no definite undertaking. Dr. McRory and himself then go away again to settle this with Mr. Shortt. About 9 o'clock they return with Mr. Chippendale (Acting Governor) and Colonel Owen Lewis (Chief Prison Inspector). It is agreed there is to be no attempt to punish us and that Doran be handed over by me at 10.30 to-night. They want all of us to evacuate B.Wing to-night, but I refuse, saying we will see the New Year in "in our quarters".

Doran was handed over at 10.30 o'clock to-night to Acting Governor. In answer to a question, he, Chippendale, tells me we go to Mass the next day in the ordinary way. He wants to have no noise to-night. I tell him we will have our usual concert. I send

men to take down barricade on B.2 to enable us to go to chapel in the morning, but the Acting Governor prevents the work being done.

Wednesday (New Year's Day), Chief Warder about 7 o'clock. wants barricade removed by our men. I tell him that I sent men to do this on previous night, and the Governor had ordered them away and insulted them - that the men would do the work only at the time I appointed for them and would take no bullying from the Governor or anybody else.

We hear Mass on corridors behind barricades.

Interview with Fr. MacCauley after Mass. He is much upset about the occurrence. He thinks it will "smash the settlement". I told him we don't care. About 9 o'clock. I asked Chief Warder to let me know hour fixed for our moving to new quarters. He cannot answer. Dr. McRory and Lord Mayor (Dublin) visit prison 10 a.m. to-day. Seem to think we have broken through the arrangement. I explain and they are satisfied. (Apparently, they were not told about men being stopped from removing barricades last night, nor, that I had asked Chief Warder to fix hour for evacuation). They leave to make arrangements.

Bishop and Lord Mayor come again soon, with Acting Governor, and we are to march out at once into A.1 to have dinner there, pending preparation of C.Wing this evening. Our guards are now withdrawn. We line up and march in single file along narrow landing around -

the barricades previously removed by volunteers - into A.1, where a few words are spoken each by E. Blythe, Fr. MacCauley and myself. Dr. McRory also addresses the men. Cheers are given for Dr. McRory and the Lord Mayor, and the men are dismissed. Military officers are interested spectators of the scene.

(Ameliorations suspended on morning of 21/1/19 for alleged "general disorder" on the previous night. We were kept in solitary confinement from that date until 29th April when removal to Manchester took place.)

About 6.30 p.m. on 29th April, 1919, the Belfast Governor (Captain Barrowes) entered my cell and said: "Well, it has come at last. Ye are to be removed for internment. The military will be here at 7.30 to take you over". I said I wanted a guarantee that we were going to an internment camp. He replied that he could not give that, and I then told him I would resist being taken away. He left to inform the other men, but he does not appear to have repeated his falsehood about our being interned.

Half-an-hour or so later, two warders and three police came, and I was thrown down and handcuffed. In my weak state after fourteen weeks' solitary confinement, I was able to offer but a feeble resistance. At 7.30 I was carried downstairs and

out into "A" Yard, and put into a military lorry, in which were a number of soldiers and police. There I heard for the first time that we were to be put on board ship, but we did not learn its destination.

We were driven to the Fleetwood Steamers Dock and put on board a vessel. In the cabin with me were Finian Lynch, John Doran, Paddy McCarthy, Pat Gaffney, Seumas Duggan, Seumas P. Cassidy, Con Connolly, Micheál Keating and Seamus Mulcahy Lyons - ten in all. (This left thirteen behind us in Belfast for release on ill-health).

It was 9 p.m. or so before the steamer got under way, and we had a few songs from time to time. The voyage was very slow. Much delay took place entering Fleetwood. The boat got on the mud for an hour or so, and had to be taken off by a tug. We landed about 9 a.m. and were put on board train for Manchester, where we arrived at 11 o'clock. (Not a bite of food or sup of drink had been offered us since leaving Belfast Gaol 15 or 16 hours previously). A Black Maria conveyed us from Victoria Station to prison, where we were ordered into the "reception". After a while, the Governor came along and got papers from military officer. The name of Patrick McCarthy was called out, but none of us responded. I heard military officer saying he did not know who was who amongst us, and apparently the police did not know all of us. I believe I was known, however, for the Chaplain seemed to take me as the leader when he came to see me not

long after. But this is anticipating. When they found out we were not going to answer names, we were put into reception cells. A kind of dinner was served to us then. It was there the Chaplain came to see me in a quarter of an hour or so. He asked me to facilitate matters, and that everything would be alright, and I told him I should know first how we were to be treated. He left me then, and the Governor came along in about half-an-hour. He enquired whether I was "Stack". I admitted I was, as I wished to learn how we stood. He looked and spoke like a decent man, and we discussed matters for some time. He said he had no definite instructions about us, and, at his request, I told him the terms we had enjoyed at Belfast prior to 21st January. He promised to give us same conditions, pending the arrival of instructions, and I agreed to let the men give their names, etc.. This was done, and we were conducted to C.1, a ward to ourselves. I was located in No. 33. After a while, we went out and exercised for a little while. Came into supper about 4 o'clock, and at 4.30 the warder proceeded to lock us up, this being the usual hour for Manchester Prison. I objected, but eventually let it go until I should see the Governor next day.

Thursday, 1st May, doors open 6 o'clock. Asked to get up. Said no, we would get up when we saw fit. Breakfast at 7, doors open meantime. Locked up till

7.45 when cells re-opened, and left open all day except during dinner. Saw Governor about six o'clock closing, and he asked me to let it stand over, but I refused, and he promised to do his best to arrange. Later, Chief Warder informed me this would be alright. Got permission to wire Michael Collins, and did so. Drew 10/9d. and ordered newspapers. All of us spent some time going through our belongings, sent along from Belfast, packed every way, and much crushed and injured. Not locked up until six o'clock.

Friday, 2nd May, we heard Mass at 8.10 a.m., after breakfast. Things seem to be settling down. Got letter re-addressed from Belfast. No visits, no Irish papers, though "Independent" ordered yesterday. Saw "Daily Mail", but no Irish news in it. Re-started Gaelic classes to-day.

Men Engaged In Siege of B. Wing.

P. Belton
E. Blythe
J. Brandon
J. Byrne
T. Brosnan
J.P. Cassidy
C. Connolly
T. Counihan
M. Costello
R. Costello
H.P. Crawley
J. Crowley
J. Curley
J. Curran
J. Deane

M. Dennehy	P. McCarthy
J. Devine	J. McMahon
P. Dineen	P. McKenna
Joseph Dillon	B. McNally
D. Domigan	C. Minogue
J. Doran	J. Monaghan
T. Duff	P. Murphy
J. Duggan	M.D. Nugent
J. Fitzpatrick	T. Nevin
D.F. Fitzpatrick	J. Noonan
T. Fitzpatrick	C. O'Brien
P. Fay	Jno. O'Hare
T. Furlong	M. O'Hare
P. Gaffney	T. O'Shea
E. Gormley	J. O'Sheehan
T. Hayes	Jas. J. O'Kelly
W. Hoolan	F. Phillips
J. Jennings	H. Pollock
M. Keating	M. Ryan
W. Keating	P. Redmond
R. Kelly	D. Scannell
J.D. Kenny	P. Shea
Denis Kenny.	L. Smith
J. Kavanagh	A. Stack
J. Leahy	M. Stapleton
T. Leahy	B. Sullivan
J. Lennon	W. Sweeney
J. Lowe	C. Timoney
F. Lynch	J.P. Traynor
J.M. Lyons	R. Treacy
J. McAree	M. Thornton
L.J. McCrudden	Jas. Walsh
D. McCarthy	M.J. Wedick

	(M. Deegan
	(J. Driscoll
	(J.J. Hassett
In hospital	(Hynes
	(T. O'Connor
	(T. Shevlin
	(P. Toner

In bed in hospital	(P. Lenagh
	(J. Smith

From this on, things went quietly in Manchester. The Governor lived up to Austin's estimate of him, and treated them well. They were allowed association with each other, given facilities for games and classes, allowed visitors and parcels. On the 19th July, 1918, Fionan Lynch was released. Great regret was felt for him by Austin and all the prisoners. Before going, Fionan, Pierce Beasley and Austin had discussed the possibility of escape, and Pierce Beasley, in his life of Michael Collins, gives an accurate account of how it was managed.

Patrick O'Donoghue, who was living in Manchester and had assisted at the escape of de Valera from Lincoln, took complete charge of all the arrangements in Manchester. For purpose of code, Collins was "Angela", and O'Donoghue was "Maud". Two released prisoners, Mulcahy Lyons and Seumas Duggan, were able to bring out verbal instructions from inside to the friends preparing without. The remaining prisoners, besides Austin and Pierce Beasley, were the famous Sean Doran, D.P. Walsh of Fethard, Paddy McCarthy and Con Connolly of Cork. The prisoners were allowed exercise at 5 p.m., in charge of one warder, when the other prisoners were all locked up. It was decided, when the warder unlocked the door leading to the exercise yard, that he should be overpowered and gagged, the prisoners should run to the wall, throw over a stone, which would be answered by the friends outside, and this in turn would pull over a rope ladder. Meantime, the accomplices on the other side had to

"hold up" a street in which a number of warders' houses were situated.

The day arranged, after various vicissitudes, came at last - Saturday, October 25th, 1919. The warder was tied up with strips of sheets and put into a cell, which closed automatically. Walsh hammered wooden pegs into the keyholes to prevent pursuit. Presently, a rope, with a stone attached, soared over the wall. First it was too short, but later Peadar Clancy, on the wall from the outside, discovered this and rectified it. O'Donoghue met Austin and Beasley, directed them down a side street to a waiting taxi and lodged them with a young Irishman, named George Lodge. The other prisoners were provided with bicycles and, after some time, were able to collect together and get housed safely. Rory O'Connor was in charge of the rescue party. Peadar Clancy, Christie O'Malley and Owen Cullen came with him from Dublin.

Later, Austin, O'Donoghue, McMahon and Beasley travelled by train to Liverpool, where they were housed by a lady, Mrs. McCarthy, and then smuggled over in the forecastle of a ship sailing for Dublin. They were driven to the house of Batt O'Connor in Brendan Road. From there, Austin was brought to my house in 8, Lansdowne Terrace, from where he worked in conjunction with Cathal Brugha, who was also living with him at this period.

At this time, Austin was appointed Minister of Home Affairs. He set up the Arbitration Courts and attended Dáil

meetings. He had offices in various places and was repeatedly raided. One time, in Molesworth Street, the office was raided by a force of Black and Tans, whilst he and Miss Madge Clifford, his secretary, looked on in the crowd outside.

He appointed judges, and arranged for district courts to be held all over the country. I remember Mr. Creed Meredith and Judge O'Byrne acting for him. I remember also Mrs. McKean acting as judge in Kerry on an arbitration court. I know he was immensely interested in all the work, but my intimate knowledge of it was very little, as he rarely spoke about it in the house. His ministry was also in charge of emigration. People found it difficult to leave Ireland without a Republican passport, and those who could not produce one found themselves rather friendless on arrival in America. Mr. Dan Browne, at present Land Court Judge, acted with him and is in a position to give exact details of the work done by the Department.

Christmas, (1920) came and went. The Black and Tan war intensified, and those of us, who had "visitors", lived in perpetual unrest finding safe houses for persons and documents. My house was raided a few times at this period. On the second occasion, Austin was in and took refuge in an attic, between the ceiling and the slates, and put his foot through the former, leaving a deposit of plaster as the raiders were descending the stairs. They were put off with an excuse about painters, as they hadn't seen the thing

actually happening.

The following is a short epitome, in his own words, of Austin's activities from his release in 1917 to the Truce:-

"I was released with de Valera and the other convicts in June, 1917, re-arrested in August, 1917, and court-martialled for wearing uniform and speaking seditiously, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Released November, 1917, after hunger-strike.

I had been elected as Secretary to Sinn Féin Organisation at the first great Ard-Fheis, October, 1917, during my imprisonment. When I came out, I took up duty. I was again arrested about 4th May, 1918, and sent to Belfast Gaol to complete my term of two years.

I was in Belfast Gaol during General Election of December, 1918, and until 1st May, 1919, when I was transferred to Strangeways Prison, Manchester. I remained there until I escaped about the end of October. I came to Ireland in November, 1919.

President de Valera, before leaving for America, had arranged that I should get a place in the Cabinet of the Republican Government. Acting President Griffith appointed me Minister of Home Affairs in December, 1919, and I held that office until January, 1922, when the so-called Treaty was approved by the Dáil.

I attended all Cabinet meetings (save one, I think) and all Dáil meetings between those dates. The first Dáil session after my release was held on 29th June, 1920. Subsequent sessions were, I think, August, 1920, February, May and August, September and October, 1921. Then after London agreement, December, 1921, January, 1922.

I was in charge of the Department of Home Affairs. The principal work done was in organising Courts. When I took over the Department from Mr. Griffith - who had been in charge of Home Affairs himself up to then - I found the work done had been very little. Arbitration Courts had been authorised by a Decree of Dáil Éireann - and even those were not generally established. In fact, except in Clare, hardly anything had been done.

A scheme for working arbitration courts was prepared and circulated early in 1920, and parish and district justices were elected in many places between January and June.

It was decided by the Cabinet to extend the jurisdiction and power of the Courts. I was doubtful as to the ability of our courts to deal with criminals and hesitated before I agreed to set up criminal courts. The Minister for Defence (Cathal Brugha) however, undertook to get the Irish Republican Army to do police work, etc..

Having, at the Dáil sessions of June 29th, 1920, got authority to set up civil and criminal courts, I proceeded to do so at once. Supreme Court judges were appointed who heard actions in Dublin and also tried appeals.

There were Circuit judges who went to the counties and tried actions locally - as well as appeals from District Courts and criminal cases. The Court Rules were published about August, 1920, - after submission to Cabinet and others - after circulation amongst members of Dáil who attended the August meeting.

The result of the setting up of the Republican Courts was that there was little business for the British Courts to do. Anyway, the fact remained that, by July, 1921, when the Truce was signed, the British courts, except certain divisions of the High Court in Dublin, had no work to do worth mentioning. There were some matters which our Courts were unable to deal with, such as, Lunacy and Minor cases, and, in such, we used to issue "permits" to avail of the enemy machinery.

Our criminal courts even sentenced to death on one occasion, and the sentence was carried out with the approval of the Cabinet. I think that was in the Autumn of 1920 in the case of a man, named Gordon, who was found guilty of the murder of a

young man, named Clinton, on the borders of Meath and Cavan. I had the matter twice before the Cabinet. They ordered a re-trial first, and this was held, with the same result - a death sentence. When I brought the matter up again, the only stipulation imposed was that the prisoner should have the benefit of a clergyman of his own faith. (He was a Protestant.) This was done, and the execution carried out. The date would be about Autumn 1920.

Police, known as Irish Republican Police, were formed under my department to assist the courts and to execute decrees, etc.. The police officers were, as a rule, handed over to my charge by the Irish Republican Army. They were Volunteers, that is, unpaid - for the most part - but, in some instances, particularly in cities, they had to be wholetime, and this necessitated payment of wages."

The following is an account, in Austin's own words, of the Peace Negotiations in London in which he took part:

"For some time past I have been thinking of putting on paper my Recollections. I had hoped to be able to sketch more or less briefly particulars of my parentage and family and to give an outline of my early life. This, or most of it, would no

doubt be very uninteresting, but I was of opinion that I might be able to contribute something of interest concerning the Gaelic Athletic Association and the part Kerry played in raising the status of Gaelic games between 1902 and 1908.

More than all, I had hoped to be able to tell all I could remember of the establishment of the Irish Volunteers in November, 1913, and of the part Kerry had taken up to the Rising of 1916. After that, I might have related my own prison experiences and what I recalled about the Sinn Féin organisation, the elections of 1917 and 1918, the Grand Election of December, 1918, the establishment of the Government of the Republic and its working down to the Truce. From that, I had intended to go on to the Anglo-Irish Negotiations, which ended in the so called "Treaty", and to set forth from memory all I knew about these.

As I am on the twelfth day of a hunger strike and as it is impossible to calculate how long more I may be fit for writing, I am, for the moment anyway, abandoning my idea of a life story. The most important matter of all is the Anglo-Irish Negotiations and, in the ensuing, I make an effort to write the circumstances which led up to the signing of the "Treaty". It will be readily understood that I am writing without references of

any kind. This being so, occasional errors are possible, but, as the documents dealing with the whole period are extant, any mistakes which I make can be easily corrected.

As long ago as January or February, 1922, an undertaking was given that the documents which I have referred to would be published; but this has never been done. I only wish the people had seen and digested their contents. Had they done so, matters might be very different to-day.

It seems almost unnecessary to remind my reader - if this be ever read - that, as a result of December, 1918, General Election, the Republicans were returned with a huge majority. Out of 105 seats (including Ulster, of course), we won 78 if I remember aright. The Ulster Unionists took most of the remainder, and the old "Nationalist Party" got in only a few members to go to Westminster.

On the 21st January, 1919, the Republicans - or those who were out of prison - met in Dublin, and established Dáil Éireann and the Government of the Republic. (I was in Belfast Gaol then.) Later on, de Valera, Griffith and others, who were interned in England, were released and de Valera, who had been chosen President, formed a Government. To my surprise, word was sent to me that a place on the Cabinet had been reserved for me. But it was many

months before I was able to return and take up duty.

It was not long before the British Government realised the seriousness of the situation, and they proceeded to attack the Dáil's various Departments. And the Irish Volunteers were gaining in strength and otherwise, all over the country. The business of the Volunteers was to defend the Republic. This naturally led to fighting and ambushing and attack and imprisonments and ugly deeds of all kinds, particularly after the arrival of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, which took place in the latter half of 1920.

Meanwhile British administration was at a standstill. British Courts of Justice were completely boycotted and, in their place, the Courts of the Republic were functioning practically everywhere. The Local Government bodies throughout the country had refused to recognise the British Local Government Board and were acting under the Republican Department of Local Government, and so on with other civil departments.

Then the Republican Army (as the Volunteers had come to call themselves) had driven the British garrisons to the larger centres and, except in those cities and big towns, the British military and police with their Black and Tans and Auxiliaries had practically no sway.

It would be quite true to use the old quotation: "The King's Writ did not run", with this alteration, that even in the Pale it had no force.

What wonder then that Mr. Lloyd George came to realise that government by brute force had failed; that any kind of British government in Ireland was impossible; and that, when all his previous "feelers" to draw us to make overtures had been unsuccessful, in the month of June, 1921, he addressed an invitation to de Valera to meet him to discuss Peace.

Before proceeding to discuss the negotiations proper, I would wish to go back to the month of September or October, 1920. My purpose is to refer to a matter which took place at a Cabinet meeting. After the business on the agenda had been disposed of, Acting President Griffith took a paper from his pocket. He started off by explaining that he had nothing at all to do with the business he was going to speak about, and that he had told the people, who had given him the paper which he held, that he would have nothing to say to the proposal which it contained. He then related that a deputation of two or three Unionists whom he named - but whose names I forget, except that of Mr. Andrew Jameson - had waited upon him and told him they were going over to England to see Mr. Balfour. They were to say to Balfour

that the Irish people must get full self-government and that Terence MacSwiney, who was then on the hunger-strike in Brixton, should be released. They would put it up to Balfour that there would be terrible happenings in Ireland if MacSwiney died - that he, Balfour, did not have to live in Ireland; they, the Irish Unionists, had. Mr. Griffith then read the proposals which were somewhat on the lines of Dominion Home Rule with, I think, a separate parliament for Ulster, if Ulster so desired. But I did not attach much importance to the matter and, as I only heard the document read over rapidly by Mr. Griffith, I cannot recall the details. I remember that Cathal Brugha said something like this: "You told them you would have nothing to do with the matter" to Mr. Griffith interrogatively. Mr. Griffith replied: "Yes, that's what I said". "Very well so", answered Cathal, "it is no affair of ours what they do". Mr. Griffith further said that he thought it well these people should go over, as they might be the means of saving MacSwiney's life. It was early in his explanations that he said this, I think.

This was the last I ever heard of this Unionist deputation's attempt to "settle the Irish question".

Sometime about the end of November or early in December, some people in Ireland were becoming very

panicky. And when Mr. Lloyd George in a speech expressed himself as being prepared to discuss a settlement or something of that kind, the Galway County Council was rushed into passing some ridiculous peace resolution, and there were one or two other events happened which gave the English the idea we were weakening. This had the effect of postponing a Truce. But I am putting the cart before the horse. I think it was early in December that Most Rev. Dr. Clune, an Australian Bishop, met Lloyd George in London and, at the latter's request, came to Dublin to visit Mr. Griffith (then in Mountjoy Gaol) with a view to effecting a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary to Peace discussions. The Bishop had several interviews with Mr. Griffith, and he had a couple of meetings with Michael Collins, who had been appointed Acting President in Mr. Griffith's place. Draft terms of Truce were drawn up by Mr. Griffith and approved by the Cabinet. Then there was some alteration, for Michael Collins wrote to Cathal Brugha and myself with amended form. The matter was urgent and we approved at once. Dr. Clune and Lloyd George and all were pleased with this, but it seems some of the Dublin Castle folk advised the British Government that our forces were cracking up and the British drew back from the negotiations. Dr. Clune returned to Australia, and there the episode ended.

Of course, everyone recalls Lord Derby's visit when he interviewed de Valera and Cardinal Logue. This took place in May or early in June of 1921.

Anyway, Peace negotiations were in the air in May and June.

One day, a lady whom I had met but once previously sent me a mysterious message to the effect that she wished to speak with me, and she suggested Marlboro Street cathedral as venue. I named an hour, and went to the rendez-vous. She brought me a message from Mr. A.W. Cope, one of the Under-Secretaries at Dublin Castle, requesting me to meet him. I asked on what business, and the lady said: "About Peace". I refused point blank to meet Mr. Cope, saying that President de Valera was the person to discuss Peace and that the English who were about the meeting with Lord Derby knew how to arrange another if necessary.

I mention this incident here as I believe Mr. Cope was England's chief instrument in bringing about the signing of the "Treaty". I know he frequently met some of our Ministers and others who subscribed to and supported the document. He made a couple of other unsuccessful attempts to meet me later on - during the Truce - but I hope to deal with those in their order.

It will be remembered that de Valera was arrested near Blackrock about the end of June. The British won evidently on the point of issuing their invitation to

him to meet Mr. Lloyd George and, as his imprisonment would be an embarrassment at that particular moment, the President was released on the day following his capture.

A few days later Mr. Lloyd George made public his invitation to a peace conference. I think it was published in the Sunday newspapers before it reached the President. It was accepted - we had a visit from General Smuts - and the Truce was drawn up and signed by both sides. The date of the Truce was, I think, Saturday, the 9th July, 1921, and it came into force at noon on the following Monday.

On Monday afternoon the President sent for me and told me to be ready to start with him for London on the following morning. The party was to consist of the President, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Robert Barton, Count Plunkett and myself, besides Erskine Childers - who was in charge of Publicity at the moment - and some small staff.

Tuesday morning saw us all aboard the mail steamer at Dún Laoghaire. All the Irish in London seemed to be waiting our train at Euston, and it was with difficulty we reached our hotel - the Grosvenor. The President did not stay there but at a private house lent him through some Irish sympathiser.

There was any amount of photography of all kinds en route and at the hotel, and the press lined the

corridor looking for interviews. As I felt that the English might not, at this stage, be willing to recognise the Republic, I carefully avoided the camera. I was not well known, and very few of the British secret service men would have been able to identify me passing along the street during the war. Anyhow I had eluded them for nearly two years going about the city every day, and I was not going to aid them in finding me if the war should be renewed.

We remained in London for about eleven days. During that time the President and Lloyd George met on three occasions, I think. None of the rest of us were present on either occasion, so I cannot say what transpired. After, the President used to call us together and inform us of what had taken place. I cannot recall any details worth setting down but the two statesmen seemed to be sizing one another up most of the time. The Welshman did his level best to pump de Valera and vice versa. It was arranged early that the British were going to submit proposals in writing. After the second interview, we had reason to believe they were not going beyond Dominion Home Rule. I was anxious to go home at once but was asked to stay on. Ulster had hardly been touched upon but, in an interview we had with Smuts, I insisted that the Ulster situation was of England's making and that England should adjust it and give us Ireland to ourselves without any English connection and that we would treat

the North decently and fairly. About three or four days after our arrival Sir ~~John~~^{James} Craig, who had been brought over too, it seemed, made some press statements about Ulster's integrity. This was after leaving the Prime Minister. The President was very wroth about this, and wrote to Lloyd George asking whether he approved of this statement. We were ordered to pack up and prepare for home, but Lloyd George's reply caused this to be changed.

I remember walking out several evenings with Arthur Griffith. I recall one evening in particular. We knew at the time that the British proposals would not satisfy us. At least I did. When we were passing through Whitehall, Griffith turned to me and then, looking up at a building, said: "Would you like to take that to Dublin with you, Austin?". I said: "It is a fine place. What is it?". "Oh, that's the Home Office", he replied. I saw the drift only then, and I asked Griffith: "Surely you do not regard it as possible that we should accept the British terms?". "I think they are pretty good", he answered. "But", I said, "how could we conscientiously accept the British King - look at the dead who have given their life for the Republic." "Oh, I see that it is your conscience that is the matter", was his answer. We left it at that for the moment. I think it was on the following night that he repeated the joke about the Home Office to Desmond Fitzgerald as the three of us were passing

the same spot.

At last the British proposals came, and the President read them to us. I demurred at once. Count Plunkett also stated they were not acceptable. Barton very deliberately said: "Mr. President, would it not be treason to the Republic for you to bear these terms to Ireland?". The President acquiesced, and the original document was returned to Mr. Lloyd George at once.

We returned home then at once, arriving I think on Friday night, 22nd July I think. On the following Sunday we had a meeting of Cabinet Ministers and others at the President's house at Blackrock. The terms were discussed and, whilst everyone except Cathal Brugha and myself appeared to be cautious, I got the impression strongly forced upon me that Griffith and Collins and Mulcahy (who had also been invited) were inclined to view the proposals favourably - that is, that they were in the main acceptable. Cathal was bluntly opposed to anything less than the recognition of the Republic, and I supported him as well as I was able.

There was no vote taken, nor anything of the kind. Of course, we knew the British proposals were not disposed of by the President's refusal to be the bearer of the document to the Irish people. Dublin Castle was the channel through which the terms were submitted. This involved a full ministry meeting. Those present were invited to express their views but most were very

cautious. Griffith was favourable to proposals save as to Ulster. Cathal Brugha, of course, was honest and straightforward. He would have "none of it". Michael Collins described the offer as a great "step forward" and used the "stepping stone" argument I think, but of this I am not sure. MacNeill and Cosgrave did not give themselves away one bit. Joseph MacDonagh, "Sceilg" and Art O'Connor were all dead against accepting less than absolute Independence, and so was Etchingham. I do not remember whether Barton expressed himself decidedly but I took him to be with us.

Anyhow it was thought necessary to submit the terms to Dáil Éireann, and a meeting of the Dáil was arranged to be summoned for August 15th.

This Assembly was to be the first meeting of the Second Dáil, as there had been no meeting since the May, 1921, elections.

When the Dáil met, there was much ceremonial for the first day or two, such as, the swearing in of the members and so on. Needless to state, all of the Teachtaí took the oath of allegiance to the Republic. Then we had the election of de Valera as President and afterwards came the nomination of the new Cabinet and Ministry. I might mention here that the President now adopted a new plan - or rather a new plan so far as the Dáil Government went

anyway - of having a small Cabinet consisting of Foreign Affairs (A. Griffith), Home Affairs (A. Stack), Defence (C. Brugha), Finance (M. Collins), Local Government (W. Cosgrave), Economic Affairs (R.C. Barton). The heads of the other Departments were to meet by themselves separately or with selected members of the Cabinet, such as, the Minister for Economic Affairs to discuss their departmental work.

I think it was after de Valera had been proposed for election as President he made a short speech in which he used the phrases - often since referred to - that the interpretation he put on the Oath was "that he should do his best for Ireland", and he made use of the expression that he was not a doctrinaire Republican as such. Whatever uneasy feeling these two statements may have caused some of us at the time, in the light of after events it shows de Valera up as a scrupulous and conscientious man. I do not believe that he had in mind the abandonment of the Republic - as is charged by his enemies. On the other hand, none of the men who voted for the subversion of the Republic and of Ireland's Independence in the following January qualified their oaths in any way. On the contrary, they swallowed them whole and entire and, when the test came, they broke their solemn pledges just as completely.

A secret session of the Dáil took place to consider the British proposals. They were rejected unanimously and enthusiastically, though everyone knew of England's

threat to renew the war.

A public session followed, and the Dáil's reply to the proposals was read.

Then followed the famous correspondence between the President and Mr. Lloyd George. This is very interesting reading, and anyone who has been led away by Free State propaganda into the belief that "the Republic was let down before the Plenipotentiaries went to London" should peruse all the communications with scrupulous care. The title of Ireland to its complete and absolute Independence is maintained in the President's letter throughout. Lloyd George, on the other hand, is anxious to get an acknowledgement of England's sovereignty, but without success. A conference, to open at Inverness, has been arranged and, in a letter dated September, the President makes it clear and plain that our representatives go into the negotiations as the representatives of a free and independent nation. This message is borne to Lloyd George in Scotland by Harry Boland and Joe McGrath. Lloyd George asks them to bring it back to the President, as it could not be accepted with the statements referred to - it was the second paragraph of the letter. He said there would be no conference unless this was deleted. We had a meeting of the Dáil on the matter, and the President's letter was

unanimously approved. War or no war - conference or not. This was communicated to Lloyd George, of course, and we heard no more about the matter for nearly two weeks - if I remember aright. Meantime, the British Cabinet had met about the matter, and with the following result: Lloyd George writes de Valera another letter, suggesting that the previous correspondence be all wiped out and issuing a new invitation to our representatives to meet Britain's representatives in London. The final letter (drafted by Griffith - the only one on our side not the composition of de Valera himself) accepts the invitation, saying that both sides have set forth their positions already and were mutually understood - or to that effect.

I think we had selected our Plenipotentiaries prior to this, but anyway I shall say a few words as to how they were chosen. We had the matter on at a Cabinet meeting in the first instance. It was suggested early that the President should go himself but he had his objections. He pointed out that he was in the position of head of the state as well as head of the Government and that, in his absence, it would be always said they had to consult the President and their other colleagues in Dublin. And I think he mentioned - if he did not, someone else did - the failure of President Wilson at Versailles. He prevailed, and we proceeded to select five Plenipotentiaries. The President

suggested Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins for a start, saying the country undoubtedly wanted these men to go. I entered a weak kind of objection and said that my reason was that both gentlemen had been in favour of the July proposals. Griffith first challenged this statement, and I repeated it and said I understood from him he only wanted some modifications. "Yes", he said, "some modifications." Collins then took up my objections to himself, and denied that he would accept the proposals. I reminded him of what he had said at Blackrock. He protested he had said nothing of the kind. Cathal and the President then assured me I had misunderstood Mick at Blackrock. I accepted this and said no more. I knew there were to be instructions limiting the powers of the Plenipotentiaries, and I believed that these made everything quite safe. Mr. Barton, Mr. Gavan Duffy and Mr. Duggan were then selected without much discussion, the former because of his knowledge of economics, and the latter two as lawyers.

I mentioned the absolute necessity of procuring the services of some first class constitutional lawyer from America or Europe, if necessary, to look after our interests. Mr. Griffith promised to look after this; I had a private conversation with him afterwards - it may have been some days later - and he repeated his promise. I even said to him if he did not have time

to get an American or Frenchman, he might be able to obtain the services of an independent Englishman to act for us for the present. The fee, I pointed out, was of small consequence - an ambiguous phrase might cause endless trouble on the interpretation of a document. I remember I referred to Lord Bryce and said if he accepted a retainer from us, he might be better than having nobody.

But, as it turned out, the Plenipotentiaries got no constitutional lawyer to act with them in London. On one of Mr. Collins' visits to Dublin, I drew the matter up to him, and he said: "Oh we are all right, we have John Chartris advising us". I asked him what Mr. Chartris knew about constitutional law, and the reply was that he was the author of a work on the Workmen's Compensation Act! I tried to press the point but it was to no purpose. Events have run a bit out of their order, I fear, but anyway a meeting was held of the Dáil which ratified the appointment of the Plenipotentiaries.

I cannot say whether or not it was at this meeting that a discussion arose on "compromise". It came up at some meeting anyhow and, unless I mistake it, was raised by Miss MacSwiney. She referred to rumours afloat and an inexplicable atmosphere of compromise. Where did it originate? Who was responsible? Did it

come from any man or section of men in the Dáil? And then she challenged any member who thought we should accept less than our sovereign rights "to speak now, or to remain for ever silent". Not one accepted her challenge. Kevin O'Higgins rose and made a milk and watery speech, but said nothing about reducing our demand. A deputy, who described himself as one of the "silent members", stood up and made a sound die-hard speech. He was followed by another and another, including Mr. Alex. McCabe who advocated fighting every foot of ground until the surviving soldiers of the Republic dug themselves into the Aran Islands fighting to the last. There was not a word said that day, or any other, in the Dáil between July and December in favour of taking less than the Republic, the whole Republic, and nothing but the Republic.

A further Cabinet meeting or two, a couple of discussions on what was meant by "external association", the settling of the instructions for the Plenipotentiaries, and all was ready for their departure to London. They left early in the second week of October.

Just before the departure of the Plenipotentiaries for London, I learned that Mr. Griffith had set up two committees - one a "legal and constitutional committee" with Mr. Nolan Whelan as secretary, and the other an

"Ulster Committee" with Mr. Sean Milroy in charge. This should have been my work, as Home Secretary, but he never said a word to me on the matter. I made it my business to speak to him, however, and rather than have any trouble I accepted his Committees under my Department, on condition that I should approve of the personnel. Mr. Nolan Whelan had got together a few legal men on his Committee, and I insisted upon the Republican Supreme Court judges being added. I was informed that Mr. T.M. Healy had refused to act - the envoy to him was Mr. Milroy - so I went and saw Mr. Healy myself and got him to become chairman. They had some meetings but I fear the members got little or nothing to do before the treaty was signed. They were ready to advise all right if they were called upon, but they were not. Mr. Healy was, I understood, brought over to London but not as a lawyer. He was asked to do some political work which was the wrong thing altogether for he had always been quite candid about his attachment to the Crown.

I never heard that the "Ulster Committee" even did or was asked to do anything except to prepare some charts showing the areas predominantly "Nationalist" in the Six Counties. Mr. Milroy brought these to London and remained there the rest of the time.

The Plenipotentiaries arranged to keep us fully

advised from day to day of all that took place in England: and the President asked the Cabinet Ministers in Dublin, Cathal Brugha, Cosgrave and myself, to attend at his quarters each evening - or at least on each evening that there would be a dispatch - to discuss the contents. We did this. For some time - perhaps a fortnight - we used to receive detailed accounts of the discussions and we followed them closely. There was nothing alarming to us in any of the reports up to about the 25th October. We met the President, Cathal Brugha, Cosgrave and myself; and Kevin O'Higgins was also in attendance. The President had invited him to attend Cabinet meetings, as he was Cosgrave's Assistant Minister and the abler and stronger man of the two. The President read over the Report which had come that day, prefacing it by saying it was becoming serious, as we were now up against the question of "Allegiance to the Crown". The English statesmen had put it up to our men over. After reading out the document - we had followed from our own copies - the President said he wished to ascertain our views on the matter. Then, one by one, he asked us for our opinion as to whether we could give allegiance to Britain, and each man (Cosgrave and Higgins included), as he was asked, replied in the negative, and all seemed to be most serious and determined about it. The President then and there - the business being over - dictated a letter to Mr. Griffith, informing him of our views, "that we

were all here at one on the matter". Mr. Griffith appears to have been very indignant about this, as he got the other delegates to join him in a protest against their powers being taken away from them.

It was slightly earlier than this, I think, that the Pope's telegram episode arose. A telegram from the Pope to King George V. and the latter's reply were published, from which it would appear that Ireland was a British possession and that its people were subjects to the British King. The President handled this matter finely too, and his spirited wire to the Pope aroused admiration for him in all our minds.

This must have been before the 25th October, for I remember being summoned hurriedly to a meeting. Cosgrave and O'Higgins called for me in a taxi. When we arrived, the President told us that Michael Collins was over specially, he believed, about the wire to Rome. When Mr. Collins turned up, however, he said never a word about the telegram - told us some of the doings in London, the respective attitudes of some of the English Ministers and so on. Then he asked the President to go back with him to London. The President refused, saying he saw no necessity. He added, however, that if he were shown at any time that his presence was really required, he would certainly go over.

It was probably prior to this that we had to pull up

delegates for giving in too much to the English in important matters connected with liaison work. Mr. Duggan was the person chiefly responsible in this respect. I was astounded one day when the President read a communication which stated that the Republican Courts might continue to function but that no decrees were to be enforced. I swore, I think anyway I tendered my resignation which the President refused to accept, saying that he was in perfect agreement with me. Whatever he wrote to London, I never knew but I heard no more on the subject.

Then there was an equally vital question relating to defence. Our people in London, without consulting the Minister of Defence, agreed that there were to be no more arms imported into Ireland. Cathal Brugha was very angry as to this, and was at first inclined to ignore the arrangements altogether. Ultimately, he reluctantly submitted to it except with regards to certain consignments for which he had already contracted.

I remember late one night, after eleven o'clock, the Chief of Staff (Mr. Mulcahy) and the Adjutant General (Mr. O'Sullivan) drove up to the house where I was staying, and entered in haste. They asked me whether I was not holding a court next day at Mullingar and, on my saying that perhaps such a court was being held (I could not say for certain, such was the volume of work), they asked me to stop it. I inquired: "Why?". Mulcahy

said: "There's a question being asked in the House of Commons tomorrow about the matter, and we want to enable Greenwood to say that there is no such court to be held". I told him I would do nothing of the kind. "It will be attacked by the British so", said Mulcahy. "Let it be", I told him, "In that case it will be suppressed by force, but I shall not let my courts close voluntarily to please the English." My two visitors then departed. My court at Mullingar was raided, but the judge and litigants moved elsewhere and transacted the business. I mention this episode to show the effect on some of our people of contact with the English in connection with liaison work and so on during the Truce.

Very soon after the 25th October incident, the annual Ard Fheis of Sinn Féin took place. At its conclusion - about midnight - the President delivered a stirring address to the delegates which was enthusiastically applauded. It was a die-hard speech - no allegiance of any kind to any foreign authority.

In the face of all these - the Pope's wire, the 25th October letter and the Ard Fheis speech - if there was nothing else, how could any of the Plenipotentiaries imagine that they expected the President to be with them on the "Treaty"? And it is claimed that they did believe he would go with them. I fail to see any ground they had for such a hope.

Suddenly, about the end of October, our detailed

reports of full conferences between our "five" and the English Ministers ceased. Mr. Griffith wrote to us that Mr. Lloyd George had suggested that matters would progress more rapidly with smaller conferences and he suggested that Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins should meet himself and another British Minister to discuss matters from that forth. Our delegates agreed to this, unfortunately. Thenceforward we had to depend upon an occasional short note or memo. from Mr. Griffith as to what had taken place at the conference of four.

Without documents to refer to, I find it impossible to trace the negotiations through November. The documents are available, however, and, when published, will tell their own story.

There is one document however to which I must make reference before coming to the draft "Treaty" and its consideration by the Cabinet. This was a memo. prepared by Mr. Chartris, Mr. Collins said. It came before us at a specially convened meeting towards the end of November. Mr. Collins was over, and in attendance. There was reference in the document to a contribution towards the King's household, or something of the kind. Cathal Brugha at once objected, and said he would never consent to anything of the kind. Mr. Collins said that was a pity, as he feared the document had by this time - looking at his watch - been handed into Downing Street. Cathal Brugha became very angry

and I did my best to throw oil on the troubled waters.

This was the first instance of the fait accompli succeeding in the game, but we did not see this at the time. We trusted our colleagues in London implicitly.

About the end of November the President left Dublin for the South and West on a tour of Army Inspection, accompanied by the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff. He addressed the troops in various places and prepared them for a renewal of war. (It was evident that there could be no agreement in London. The English were not ready to come to the point beyond which we could not touch without dishonour, and, if England wanted more war, well, all we could do was to defend our country's honour with our lives. This is not what de Valera told the troops - it is a summary of my own of the situation of the time on which the President's remarks were leased.) . Mulcahy also made war speeches.

When the President was leaving town, he appointed me to take his place and directed that London dispatches should be sent me.

I think it was about the 30th November and in the night time that Mr. Cosgrave came out to my place and handed me a dispatch from the Plenipotentiaries which had come addressed to him. He asked me did I mind its being

so addressed. Of course I did not. We looked at the contents which were urgent - being nothing less than the draft "Treaty" and a letter from Mr. Griffith, asking to have a meeting on Saturday, 3rd December, and that he and all his colleagues would be over for it.

First thing next morning, I caused the President and the Minister of Defence to be wired for, and they arrived on Friday. Mr. Griffith came over on Friday also, and the President and himself were closeted together on that night for a considerable time.

Now we come to the meeting of Saturday, the 3rd of December, 1921. All the Cabinet Ministers were present, as well as Mr. O'Higgins. The Plenipotentiaries who were not in the Cabinet and Mr. Erskine Childers, Secretary to the Delegation, were also in attendance. The proceedings opened at 10 or 11 o'clock in the forenoon and lasted throughout the day until about 6 o'clock p.m., when the meeting concluded, just in time to enable the delegates, or some of them, to catch the night mail back to London.

The discussion throughout was on the main questions - allegiance to the British Crown and Partition. The President said he might understand Mr. Griffith giving up Independence for National Unity, but "you have got neither this nor that". Griffith argued all day in favour of acceptance and said it was the utmost limit to which the British could be got to travel. Both Barton

and Gavan Duffy differed from him on this. Collins did not speak strongly in favour of the document at all. Eventually, the President took the individual view of most of those present. I remember he did not appeal to me at all. Towards the end, however, Griffith was still persisting that the document should be signed, saying he would not take the responsibility of breaking on the question of the Crown. Then Cathal Brugha turned to him, saying: "Don't you realise that, if you sign this thing, you will split Ireland from top to bottom?". The truth seemed to strike Griffith very forcibly and he said: "I suppose that's so. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go back to London. I'll not sign the document but I'll bring it back and submit it to the Dáil and, if necessary, to the people!" That was quite satisfactory to everybody, and there was no necessity, in face of the pledge thus given, to substitute delegates to go over for the purpose of breaking off the negotiations.

During the discussions that day, it had been indicated what terms would be acceptable to a united Cabinet - the idea of External Association.

This was by no means new, as it had been spoken of before even the Delegates left Ireland in October. The Delegates were instructed to lay them as our final proposals before the British at once.

The draft "Treaty" before us on December 3rd contained

a form of oath not the same as that put into the signed document but differing not very much from it. At the meeting Cathal Brugha objected to any form of oath. Of course, he said, if the British wanted an oath from us to respect whatever "Treaty" was made, we might give it, provided they swore to us in return. The President also wanted to know where lay the need for an oath of any kind. Mr. Collins said it was to be sugar-coating to enable the English people to swallow the pill. "Well", said the President, "if it be really necessary and that we get all else we want, what harm would it be if we had an oath like this"; and he spoke words paraphrasing the form in the draft "Treaty". Cathal still persisted in refusing to consider any form of oath whatever, and there the matter ended. I agreed with the President, but I was not long realising that Cathal was right.

The Plenipotentiaries next morning in London prepared the final proposal from our side for submission to the English. These are the terms which Mr. Duggan in Dáil Éireann described as "meaning the Republic". They are the same terms which formed the basis of "Document No. 2". It was after much hesitation that Mr. Griffith accompanied Messrs. Barton and Gavan Duffy to present them to Lloyd George. Mr. Griffith, by accounts, did not put his heart into the Argument. Negotiations were broken off, and our Delegates prepared

for return home.

Now Mr. Collins did not go over with the others on Saturday night. He reached London on Monday morning and negotiations were reopened by him. They broke down again during the day, however, and were regarded as finally closed.

On that night (December 5th) I was attending an opera at the Gaiety Theatre. At its conclusion I found Gearoid O'Sullivan and Sean O'Murthuille waiting for me. The latest news from London, Gearoid said, was to the effect that the negotiations were off and the Plenipotentiaries returning. He added that the Auxiliaries seemed to be at work already, as they were all about the city, armed and interfering with people. He warned me not to stay at my usual quarters that night. I said that I'd take the chance as it was too late to look up another place. And so home I went and to bed.

Next morning I was called and told there was important news in the paper, and it was sent up to me before I had time to dress. There on the back page of the "Independent", under "Latest News", was a paragraph saying that a settlement had been reached and an agreement signed between the British and Irish representatives at 2.30 o'clock that morning. I did not know what to think. Then, when I remembered Griffith's pledge on Saturday evening, I was delighted for I thought

the English had given in to our terms. And so I lived that day until I got an evening paper containing a report of a speech delivered by Lord Birkenhead, in which he stated Ireland was to have the status of a British Colony. Then I felt really sick, and it was as a man in bad temper I proceeded to the Mansion House that night to attend the Dante celebration, at which the President, who was coming up from Limerick for the purpose, was to preside.

Awaiting the President's arrival, the Lord Mayor invited Cathal Brugha and myself into his study. It was late when the motor arrived from Limerick. The first question the President asked was: "Any news?". I said, "Yes". "Good or bad?" "Bad." I was about to show him the evening paper when I decided to leave it alone until after the meeting. He donned his gown (University) and was about to lead the way into the round room, when who should arrive but Mr. E.J. Duggan and Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald. Duggan reached the President an envelope which the President ignored. Duggan asked him to read the contents. "What should I read it for?" "Oh," said Duggan, "it is arranged that the thing be published in London and Dublin simultaneously at 8 o'clock, and it is near that hour now." "What," said the President, "to be published whether I have seen it or not?" "Oh well, that's the arrangement", Duggan replied. The President took up

the envelope, opened it, glanced over the contents. Then he came over to where I was leaning on the mantelpiece and, putting his back to the fire, said - looking down at his Professor's gown - "I see myself in three weeks, back in these, teaching". At the moment he appeared to me to be an almost broken man.

I should have mentioned that, before de Valera opened the dispatch, I said to Duggan: "Surely ye didn't make that settlement?". "What settlement?", he asked. "Is such and such an oath in it?", I asked. "Oh, yes." "And the recognition of the Crown?" "Yes." "Then why did ye sign? How could ye?" "It was war in five minutes", he said, "unless we signed." Barton's report, approved and forwarded by Griffith, of all that took place from Sunday to Tuesday morning is very interesting reading.

A few minutes later we proceeded into the Round Room, and I tried to listen to the different papers read on the author of the Divine Comedy. I half expected the President to say something to warn the people against the so called settlement but he never opened his mouth during the proceedings, save to introduce the speakers. Afterwards, Cathal and myself met him in the study but little or nothing was said. We were too full of disappointment.

The President called a Cabinet meeting next day, Wednesday, the 7th. Cathal Brugha, Cosgrave (with

O'Higgins) and myself were present. The Plenipotentiaries had not yet returned from London where they had been giving interviews showing what an "amount of Freedom" Ireland had won under the "Treaty". Mr. Cosgrave suggested we should await their arrival, and the President summoned them back by wire for a Cabinet meeting, to take place next day, the 8th, "to consider the circumstances under which the Plenipotentiaries had signed the agreement in London". These, or some such words, appeared in the official notes which he drafted for publication. Desmond Fitzgerald, who was in charge of publicity, came into the room immediately the note had been handed him and he said: "This might be altered, Mr. President. It reads as if you were opposed to the settlement". "And that is the way I intend it to read. Publish it as it is", the President told him.

Fitzgerald said aside to me a few minutes later: "I did not think he was against this kind of settlement before we went over to London". I answered: "He is dead against it now anyway. That's enough". I should have mentioned that the document brought by Duggan to the President was a signed counterpart of the agreement. The word "Treaty" never occurred in it from beginning to end and, of course, it was not a Treaty in form or otherwise. But after Duggan's departure from London,

it struck someone that the word "Treaty" would be useful for propaganda purposes, and they saw the British about it. This is how the matter is repaired. The original document is headed "Articles of Agreement". Now a fly leaf was put in, like the title page of a book, containing something like this: "In the matter of a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland. Articles of Agreement". And, on the strength of this and of the fact that in the British House of Commons it was referred to as Articles of Agreement for a "Treaty", the attempt has been and is still being persisted in to call the abortion a Treaty.

The Plenipotentiaries all returned in time for Thursday's Cabinet meeting. The attendance was complete: President, Griffith, Brugha, Collins, Cosgrave, Barton and myself, of the Cabinet; Gavan Duffy and Duggan - Plenipotentiaries - O'Higgins, whilst Erskine Childers had also been asked to attend.

The meeting lasted the whole day and late into the night. Strangely enough, we were not unfriendly towards one another. The merits and demerits of the Agreement were gone into, but not in detail to any extent. The main thing was how they came to sign. Mr. Griffith, if I remember aright, would not admit duress by the British; Mr. Collins said, if there was duress, it was only "the duress of the facts", whatever he meant by that; but both Barton and Gavan

Duffy were candid and said that they had been forced to sign. On and on dragged the discussion, the President, Cathal and myself doing our best to get the others not to press the document on the Dáil. I thought Collins was seeing the trouble ahead once - I turned to him and said, imploringly: "You have signed and undertaken to recommend the document to the Dáil. Well, recommend it. Your duty stops there. You are not supposed to throw all your influence into the scale". "I believe", I added, "if the Dáil rejects this, we will be in a better position than we were, and England will have only made a trap for herself by her action. Will you do it?". To my surprise, he made a reply which seemed unworthy of him, and I pursued the matter no further. "Where would I be then?", he growled. That ended it. The meeting ended sometime too. A division was taken - Griffith, Collins, Cosgrave and Barton voting one way and the President, Cathal and myself the other.

Barton explained that he thought he was bound to vote for the document, having signed it and undertaken to recommend it.

Immediately after the meeting, the President wrote a letter to the press, explaining his position and that of Cathal Brugha and myself. This appeared on the 9th December. Meantime, the "Treaty" and all the propoganda in its favour had three days' start, and we never made up the handicap. The British and Irish press

carried the people off their feet, in favour of the "Treaty and Peace".

I think that about ends the story of the negotiations so far as my memory - a not too good one - goes. I shall not attempt to go into the particulars of the Dáil debates on the subject. These - or most of them - can be got from the public press. Perhaps the reports of the secret sessions may also be published one day. And I shall be greatly surprised if, after perusal of all the material, the historian of the future does not give an emphatic verdict of "Guilty" against the men who, from December, 1921, onward, took part in the attempt to destroy the Irish Republic.

I had nearly forgotten to relate my other experiences of Mr. Cope. I have spoken of his attempt to meet me in May. I think it was about August he made his next effort. A prisoner, named Joseph Griffin, a friend of mine, had got out on parole. He applied for an extension and saw Cope. It transpired that Griffin and I were friends. Cope said it would be all right but he wished to speak to me. I declined to meet him, and Cope in his anger refused to grant the extension and Griffin had to return to prison.

Another effort was made soon after, through the medium of a certain professional gentleman of the South of Ireland of my acquaintance. This time the attempt

was to get me to meet Mr. Cope and Mr. James McMahon. I positively refused, saying Ireland had her selected representatives to meet those of Britain.

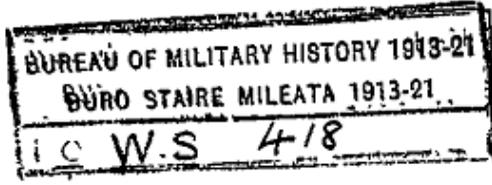
I think I had better set out the final effort in further detail. Early in the day on Thursday, December 1st, a certain civil servant - a friend of mine and also intimate with Mr. McMahon - called on me and said McMahon and Cope wished to speak to me very particularly. The matter was most urgent, practically life and death. I refused blankly, saying I would see no emissaries of Dublin Castle. This gentleman called me up again about 7 o'clock that evening and apologised for repeating his request but, he said, the two Under-Secretaries attached the highest importance to their meeting me. He named the Hotel Russell as rendez vous. I believe I was very rude in the reply I sent through this time across the wires.

I had a meeting of the Sinn Féin Standing Committee that night. After that, I had an appointment to meet a friend from Kerry at the Gresham Hotel. It was about ten o'clock when I reached the Gresham and, entering the lounge, who should I see with my friend but Mr. McMahon. My friend went away, leaving us together. He had met McMahon, let drop that he expected me, and McMahon also said he wished to speak to me on important business. The moment we were together, I said: "Mr. McMahon, this is very unfair to be hunting me about

like this when you know I do not want to see you". He replied that the matter was awfully important. "Here we were on the point of breaking off negotiations on a small point". I asked him: "What do you consider a small point?". He then pretended not to know what was the obstacle, and I said he knew well enough. He said if negotiations fell through, England would wage war ruthlessly and thousands of lives would be lost. "Very well", I said, "let them start. We can play at that game too.". "And I can tell you", I added, "there may not be a man in England's service in Ireland left alive when all is over." This staggered him. I also told him that, rather than that we should swear allegiance to England, I would be willing to see every member of Dáil Éireann shot down "out there in O'Connell Street". This ended our conversation and we parted. If he had hoped to put the "wind up", he was mistaken but I think he felt a breeze himself before he left."

SIGNED: *Seán Ó Súilleabháin*
DATE: *Giúirge P. 1950*

WITNESS: *Seán Ó Súilleabháin*



COPY 30. 8. '29.

OWN ACC. OF NEGOTIATIONS.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 418

For some time past I have been thinking of putting on paper my Recollections. I had hoped to be able to sketch more or less briefly particulars of my parentage and family and to give an outline of my early life. This, or most of it would no doubt be very uninteresting, but I was of opinion that I might be able to contribute something of interest concerning the Gaelic Athletic Assoct. and the part Kerry played in raising the status of Gaelic Games between 1902 and 1908.

More than all I had hoped to be able to tell all I could remember of the establishment of the Irish Volunteers in Novr. 1913 and of the part Kerry had taken up to the Rising of 1916. After that I might have related my own prison experiences and what I recalled about the Sinn Fein organization, the elections of 1917 and 1918 The Grand Election of Decr. 1918, the establishment of the Govt. of the Republic and its working down to the Truce. From that I had intended to go on to the Anglo Irish Negotiations which ended in the so called "Treaty", and to set forth from memory all I knew about these.

As I am on the twelfth day of a hunger strike and as it is impossible to calculate how long more I may be fit for writing I am for the moment anyway, abandoning my idea of a life story. The most important matter of all is the Anglo Irish Negotiations, and in the ensuing I make an effort to write the circumstances which led up to the signing of the "Treaty". It will be readily be understood that I am writing without references of any kind. This being so occasional errors are possible, but as the documents dealing with the whole period are extant, any mistakes which I make can be easily corrected.

As long ago as Jany. or Feby. 1922 an^d undertaken^o was given that the documents which I have referred to would be published; but this has never been done. I only wish the people had seen and digested their contents. Had they done so matters might be very different to day.

It seems almost unnecessary to remind my reader -- if this be ever read -- that as a result of Decr. 1918 General Election the Republicans were returned with a huge majority. Out of 105 seats (including Ulster of course) we won 78 if I remember aright. The Ulster unions ^{took} most of the remainder and the old "Nationalist party" got in only a few members to go to Westminster.

On the 21st. Jany. 1919 the Republicans -- or those who were out of prison -- met in Dublin, and established Dail Eireann & the Govt. of the Republic. (I was in Belfast Gaol then). Later on DeValera Griffith and others who were interned in England were released, and DeValera who had been chosen President formed a Govt. To my surprise word was sent to me that a place on the cabinet had been reserved for me. But it was many months before I was able to return and take up duty.

It was not long before the British Govt. realized the seriousness of the situation & they proceeded to attacks the Dail's various Depts. And the Irish Volunteers were gaining in strength and otherwise all over the country. The business of the Volunteers was to defend the Republic. This naturally led to fighting and ambushing and attack and imprisonments and ugly deeds of all kinds particularly after the arrival of the Black and Tans & auxiliaries which took place in the latter half of 1920.

Meanwhile British administration was at a stand still. British Courts of Justice were completely boycotted and in their place the

Courts of the Republic were functioning practically everywhere. The Local Govt. Bodies throughout the country had refused to recognise the British L.G. Board & were acting under the Republican Dept. of Local Govt. and so on with other civil Depts.

Then the Republican Army (as the Volunteers had come to call themselves) had driven the British Garrisons to the larger centres & except in those cities and big towns the British Military & police with their Black & Tans & Auxiliaries had practically no sway.

It would be quite true to use the old quotation: "The King's Writ did not run." with this alteration, that even in the Pale it had no force.

What wonder then that Mr. Lyod George came to realize that Govt. by brute force had failed; that any kind of British Govt. in Ireland was impossible; and that when all his previous "feelers" to draw us to make overtures had been unsuccessful, that in the month of June 1921¹⁹²¹ he addressed an invitation to DeValera to meet him to discuss Peace.

Before proceeding to discuss the negotiations proper I would wish to go back to the month of Sept. or Oct. 1920. My purpose is to refer to a matter which took place at a cabinet meeting. After the business on the Agenda had been disposed of Acting President Griffith took a paper from his pocket. He started off by explaining that he had nothing at all to do with the business he was going to speak about & that he had told the people who had given him the paper which he held that he would have nothing to say to the proposal which it contained. He then related that ^adeputation of two or three unionists whom he named -- but whose names I forget except that of Mr. Andrew Jameson -- had waited upon him and told him they were going over to England to see Mr. Balfour. They were to say to Balfour that the Irish people must get full Self Govt. & that Terence MacSwiney who was then on the hunger-strike in Brixton should be ^{read}realised. They would put it up to Balfour that there would be terrible happenings in Ireland if MacSwiney died -- that he, Balfour did not have to live in Ireland if the Irish Unionists had. Mr. Griffith then read the proposals which were somewhat on the lines of Dominion Home Rule with I think a separate ^{parliament} for Ulster if Ulster so desired. But I did not attach much importance to the matter, and as I only heard the document read over rapidly by Mr. Griffith I cannot recall the details. I remember that Cathal Brugha said something like this. "You told them you would have nothing to do with the matter" to Mr Griffith interrogatively. Mr. Griffith replied "Yes, that's what I said." "Very well so," answered Cathal "it is no

affair of ours what they do". Mr Griffith further said that he ~~thought~~ thought it well these people should go over as they might be the means of saving MacSwiney's life. It was early in his explanations that he said this I think.

This was the last I ever heard of this Unionist deputation's attempt to "settle the Irish question".

Sometime about the end of Novr. or early in Decr. some people in Ireland were becoming very panicky. And when Mr. Lloyd George in a speech expressed himself as being prepared to discuss a settlement or something of that kind the Galway Co. Council was rushed into passing some ridiculous peace resolution, and there were one or two other events happened which gave the English the idea we were weakening. This had the effect of postponing a Truce. But I am putting the cart before the horse. I think it was early in Decr. that Most Rev. Dr. Clune, an Australian Bishop met Lloyd George in London & at the latter's request came to Dublin to visit Mr. Griffith (then in Mountjoy Gaol) with a view to affecting a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary to Peace discussions. The Bishop had several interviews with Mr. Griffith & he had a couple of meetings with Micheal Collins, who had been appointed Acting President in Mr. Griffith's place. Draft terms of Truce were drawn up by Mr. Griffith & approved by the Cabinet. Then there was some alteration, for Michael Collins wrote to Cathal Brugha & myself a few days later with amended form. The matter was urgent and we approved at once. Dr. Clune and Lloyd George and all were pleased with

this but it seems some of the Dublin Castle folk advised the British Govt. that our forces were cracking up and the British drew back from the negotiations, Dr. Clune returned to Australia and there the episode ended.

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Of course everyone recalls Lord Derby's visit when he interviewed Devalera and Cardinal Logue. This took place in May or early in June of 1921

Anyway Peace negotiations were in the air in May and June.

One day a lady whom I had met but once previously sent me a mysterious message to the effect that she wished to speak with me and she suggested Marlboro St. Cathedral as venue. I named an hour and went to the rendez vous. She brought me a message from Mr. A.W. Cope one of the Under-Secretaries at Dublin Castle, requesting me to meet him. I asked on what business and the lady said "About Peace". I refused point blank to meet Mr. Cope, saying that President Devalera was the person to discuss Peace and that the English who were about the meeting with Lord Derby knew how to arrange another if necessary.

I mention this incident here as I believe Mr. Cope was England's chief instrument in bringing about the signing of the "Treaty". I know he frequently met some of our Ministers and others who subscribed to and supported the document. He made a couple of other unsuccessful attempts to meet me later on -- during the Truce -- but I hope to deal with those in their order

It will be remembered that DeValera was arrested near Blackrock about the end of June. The British won evidently on the point of issuing their invitation to him to meet Mr. Lloyd George, and as his imprisonment would be an embarrassment at that particular moment the President was released on the day following his capture.

A few days later Mr. Lloyd George ^{made} ~~met~~ public his invitation to a peace conference. I think it was published in the Sunday newspapers before it reached the President. It was accepted -- we had a visit from General Smuts -- and the Truce was drawn up and signed by both sides. The date of the Truce was I think Saturday the 9th. July 1921, and it came into force at noon on the following Monday.

On Monday afternoon the President sent for me and told me to be ready to start with him for London on the following morning. The party was to consist of The President, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Robert Barton Count Plunkett and myself besides Erskine Childers who was in charge of Publicity at the moment -- and some small staff.

Tuesday morning saw us all aboard the mail steamer at Dun Laoghaire. All the Irish in London seemed to be waiting our train at Euston and it was with difficulty we reached our hotel -- the Grosvenor. The President did not stay there but at a private house lent him thro' some Irish Sympathizer.

There was any amount of photography of all kinds ^{en} ~~on~~ route and at the hotel, and the press lined the corridor looking for interviews. As I felt that the English might not at this stage be willing to recognize the Republic I carefully avoided the Camera. I was not well known --

very few of the British secret service men would have been able to identify me passing along the street during the war. Anyhow I had eluded them for nearly two years going about the City every day, and I was not going to aid them in finding me if the war should be renewed.

We remained in London for about eleven days. During that time the President and Lloyd George met on three occasions, I think. None of the rest of us were present on either occasion so I cannot say what transpired. After the President used to call us together and inform us of what had taken place. I cannot recall any details worth setting down but the two statesmen seemed to be sizing one another up most of the time. The Welshman did his level best to pump Devalera and vice versa. It was arranged early that the British were going to submit proposals in writing. After the second interview we had reason to believe they were not going beyond Dominion Home Rule. I was anxious to go home at once but was asked to stay on. Ulster had hardly been touched upon, but in an interview we had with Smuts I insisted that the Ulster situation was of England's making and that England should adjust it and give us Ireland to ourselves without any English connection and that we would treat the North decently and fairly. About three or four days after our arrival Sir John Craig, who had been brought over too it seemed, made some press statements about Ulster's integrity. This was after leaving the Prime Minister. The President ^{being wrath} was ~~wrought~~ about this and wrote to Ll. George asking whether he approved of this statement. We were ordered to pack up and prepare for home but Ll. George's reply caused this to be changed.

I remember walking out several evenings with Arthur Griffith. I recall one evening in particular, We knew, at the time that the British proposals would not satisfy us. At least I did. When we were passing through Whitehall Griffith turned to me and then looking up at a building said "Would you like to take that to Dublin with you Austin?" I said "It is a fine place. What is it?" "Oh that's the Home Office" he replied. I saw the drift only then, and I asked Griffith "Surely you do not regard it as possible that we should accept the British terms". "I think they are pretty good" he answered. "But" I said "how could we conscientiously accept the British King -- look at the dead who have given their life for the Republic". "Oh I see that it is your conscience ~~is~~ that is the matter" was his answer. We left it at that for the moment, I think it was on the following night that he repeated the joke about the Home Office to Desmond Fitzgerald as the three of us were passing the same spot.

At last the British proposals came and the President read them to us. I demurred at once Count Plunkett also stated they were not acceptable. Barton very deliberately said: "Mr. President, would it not be treason to the Republic for you to bear these terms to Ireland?" The President acquiesced and the original document was returned to Mr. Lloyd George at once.

We returned home then at once, arriving I think on Friday night 22nd. July I think. On the following Sunday we had a meeting of Cabinet Ministers and others at the President's house at Blackrock.

The terms were discussed and whilst everyone except Cathal Brugha and myself appeared to be cautious I got the impression strongly forced upon me that Griffith and Collins and Mulcahy (who had also been invited) were inclined to view the proposals favourably -- that is, that they were in the main acceptable. Cathal was bluntly opposed to anything less than the recognition of the Republic and I supported him as well as I was able.

There was no vote taken nor anything of the kind. Of course we knew the British proposals were not disposed of by the President's refusal to be the bearer of the document to the Irish People. Dublin Castle was the channel through which the terms were submitted. This involved a full ministry meeting. Those present were invited to express their views but most were very cautious. Griffith was favourable to proposals save as to Ulster. Cathal Brugha of course was honest and straight forward. He would have "none of it". Michael Collins described the offer as a great "step forward" and used the "stepping stone" argument I think, but of this I am not sure. MacNeill and Cosgrave did not give themselves away one bit. Joseph MacDonagh, "Sceilg" and Art O'Connor were all dead against accepting less than absolute Independence and so was Etchingham. I do not remember whether Barton expressed himself decidedly but I took him to be with us.

Anyhow it was thought necessary to submit the terms to Dail Eireann and a meeting of the Dail was arranged to be summoned for Aug. 15th.

This Assembly was to be the first meeting of the Second Dail, as

there had been no meeting since the May 1921 elections.

When the Dail met there was much ceremonial for the first day or two such as the swearing in of the members and so on. Needless to state all of the Teachtaí took the oath of allegiance to the Republic. Then we had the election of DeValera as President and afterwards came the nomination of the new Cabinet and Ministry. I might mention here that the President now adopted a new plan -- or rather a new plan so far as the Dail Govt. went anyway -- of having a small cabinet consisting of Foreign Affairs(A.Griffith) Home Affairs(A.Stack) Defence(C.Brugha) Finance(M.Collins) Local Govt.(W.Cosgrave) Economic Affairs (R.C.Barton). The heads of the other Depts. were to meet by themselves separately or with selected members of the cabinet such as the Minister for Economic Affairs to discuss their Departmental work.

I think it was after DeValera ~~was~~ ^{had been} proposed for election as President he made a short speech in which he used the phrases -- often since referred to -- that the interpretation he put on the Oath was "that he should do his best for Ireland". and he made use of the expression that he was not a doctrinaire Republican as such. Whatever uneasy feeling these two statements may have caused some of us at the time, in the light of after events it shows DeValera up as a scrupulous and most conscientious man. I do not believe that he had in mind the abandonment of the Republic -- as is charged by his enemies. On the other hand none of the men who voted for the subversion of the Republic and of Ireland's

Independence in the following January, qualified their oaths in any way. On the contrary they swallowed them whole and entire and when the test came they broke their solemn pledges just as completely.

A secret session of the Dail took place to consider the British proposals. They were rejected unanimously and enthusiastically, tho' everyone knew of England's threat to renew the war.

A public session followed and the Dail's reply to the proposals was read.

Then followed the famous correspondence between the President and Mr Lloyd George. This is very interesting reading, and anyone who has been led away by Free State propoganda into the belief that "the Republic was let down before the plenipotentiaries went to London" should ~~peruse~~ peruse all the communications with scrupulous care. The title of Ireland to its complete and absolute Independence is maintained in the President's letter throughout. Lloyd George on the other hand is anxious to get an acknowledgement of England's sovereignty, but without success. A conference to open at Inverness has been arranged and in a letter dated Septr. the President makes it clear and plain that our representatives go into the negotiations as the reprs. of a free and independent nation. This message is borne to Lloyd George in Scotland by Harry Boland and Joe Mc.Grath. Lloyd George asks them to bring it back to the President as it could not be accepted with the statements referred to -- it was the second paragraph of the letter. He said there would be no conference unless this was deleted. We had a meetin

of the Dail on the matter and the President's letter was unanimously approved. War or no War -- Conference or not. This was communicated to Lloyd George of course and we heard no more about the matter for ... nearly two weeks -- if I remember aright. Meantime the British ~~Cabinet~~ Cabinet had met about the matter, and with the following result: ... Lloyd George writes Devalera another letter suggesting that the previous correspondence be all wiped out and issuing a new invitation to our ... reprs. to meet Britain's reprs. in London. The final letter (drafted by Griffith -- the only one on our side not the composition of Dev. himself) accepts the invitation, saying that both sides have set forth their positions already and were mutually understood -- or to that effect.

I think we had selected our Plenipotentiaries prior to this, but ... anyway I shall say a few words as to how they were chosen. We had the matter on at a cabinet meeting in the first instance. It was suggested early that the President should go himself but he had his objections. He pointed out that he was in the position of head of the state as well as head of the Govt. and that his absence would be always *said*

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~~say~~ they had to consult the President and their other colleagues in Dublin. And I think he mentioned -- if he did not some one else did -- the failure of President Wilson at Versailles. He prevailed and we proceeded to select five Plenipotentiaries. The President suggested Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins for a start saying the country undoubtedly wanted these men to go. I entered a weak kind of objection

and said that my reason was that both gentlemen had been in favour of the July proposals. Griffith first challenged this statement and I repeated it and said I understood from him he only wanted some modifications "Yes" he said "some modifications". Collins then took up my objections to himself and denied that he would accept the proposals. I reminded him of what he had said at Blackrock. He protested he had said nothing of the kind. Cathal and the President then assured me I had misunderstood Mick at Blackrock. I accepted this and said no more. I knew there were to be instructions limiting the powers of the Plenipotentiaries, and I believed that these made everything quite safe. Mr. Barton Mr. Gavan Duffy and Mr. Duggan were then selected without much discussion, the former because of his knowledge of Economics and the latter two as lawyers.

I mentioned the absolute necessity of procuring the services of some first class constitutional lawyer from America or Europe if necessary, to look after our interests. Mr. Griffith promised to look after this, I had a private conversation with him afterwards -- it may have been some days later -- and he repeated his promise. I even said to him if he did not have time/^{to} get an American or Frenchman he might be able to obtain the services of an independent Englishman to act for us for the present. The fee, I pointed out was of small consequence, an ambiguous phrase might cause endless trouble on the interpretation of a document. I remember I referred to Lord Bryce and said if he accepted a retainer from us he might be better than having nobody.

But as it turned out the Plenipotentiaries got no constitutional lawyer to act with them in London. On one of Mr. Collins' visits to Dublin I drew the matter up to him and he said "Oh we are all right we have John Chartrés advising us" I asked him what Mr. Chartris knew about constitutional Law and the reply was that he was the author of a work on the Workmens' Compensation Act! I tried to press the point but it was to no purpose. Events have run a bit out of their order I fear, but anyway a meeting was held of the Dail which ratified the appointment of the Plenipotentiaries.

I cannot say whether or not it was at this meeting that a discussion arose on "compromise". It came up at some meeting anyhow and unless I mistake it was raised by Miss MacSwiney. She referred to rumour afloat and an inexplicable atmosphere of compromise. Where did it originate? Who was responsible? Did it come from any man or section of men in the Dail? And then she challenged any member who thought we should accept less than our sovereign rights "to speak now or to remain for ever silent". Not one accepted her challenge. Kevin O'Higgins rose and made a milk and watery speech but said nothing about reducing our demand. A deputy who described himself as one of the "silent member" stood up and made a sound die-hard speech. He was followed by another and another including Mr. Alex. Mc.Cabe who advocated fighting every foot of ground until the ~~fight~~ surviving soldiers of the Republic dug themselves into the Arran Islands fighting to the last. There was not a word said that day or any other in the Dail between July and Decr. in

"Favour of taking less than the Republic the whole Republic and nothing but the Republic.

A further Cabinet meeting or two, a couple of discussions on what was meant by "external association" the settling of the instructions for the Plenipotentiaries, and all was ready for their departure to London. They left early in the second week of October

Just before the departure of the Plenipotentiaries for London I learned that Mr Griffith -- had set up two committees -- one a Legal and constitutional cttee" with Mr. Nolan Whelan as secretary and the other an "Ulster Cttee" with Mr. Sean Milroy in charge. This should have been my work as Home Sec. but he never said a word to me on the matter. I made it my business to speak to him however and rather than have any trouble I accepted his Cttes under my Dept. on condition that I should approve of the personnel. Mr. Nolan Whelan had got together a few legal men on his cttee and I insisted upon the Republican supreme court judges being added. I was informed that Mr. T.M. Healy had refused to act, the envoy to him was Mr. Milroy -- so I went and saw Mr. Healy myself and got him to become chairman. They had some meetings but I fear the members got little or nothing to do before the treaty was signed. They were ready to advise all right if they were called upon, but they were not. Mr. Healy was I understood brought over to London but not as a lawyer. He was asked to do some political work which was the wrong thing altogether for he had always been quite candid about his attachment to the Crown.

I never heard ^{what} ~~that~~ the "Ulster Cttee" even did or was asked to do anything except to prepare some charts shewing the areas predominantly 'Nationalist in the Six Counties. Mr. Milroy brought these to London and remained there the rest of the time.

The Plenipotentiaries arranged to keep us fully advised from day to day of all that took place in England; and the President asked the

Cabinet Ministers in Dublin Cathal Brugha, Cosgrave and myself to attend at his quarters each evening -- or at least on each evg. that there would be a dispatch to discuss the contents. We did this. For some time perhaps a fortnight -- we used to receive detailed accounts of the discussions and we followed them closely. There was nothing alarming to us in any of the reports up to about the 25th. October. We met the President, Cathal Brugha, Cosgrave and myself; and Kevin O'Higgins was also in attendance. The President had invited him to attend cabinet meetings as he was Cosgrave's Asst. Minister and the abler and stronger man of the two. The President read over the Report which had come that day, prefacing it by saying it was becoming serious as we were now up against the question of "Allegiance to the Crown". The English statesmen had put it up to our men over. After reading out the document -- we had followed from our own copies -- the President said he wished to ascertain our views on the matter. Then one by one he asked us for our opinion as to whether we could give Allegiance to Britian, and each man (Cosgrave and Higgins included) as he was asked replied in the negative and all seemed to be most serious and determined about it. The President then and there -- the business being over -- dictated a letter to Mr. Griffith informing him of our views "that we were all here at one on the matter". Mr. Griffith appears to have been very indignant about this as he got the other delegates to join him in a protest against their powers being taken away from them.

It was slightly earlier than this I think that the Pope's telegram

episode arose. A telegram from the pope to King George V. and the latter's reply were published from which it would appear that Ireland was a British possession and that its people were subjects to the British King. The President handled this matter finely too and his spirited wire to the pope aroused admiration for him in all our minds.

This must have been before the 25th. Octr. for I remember being summoned hurriedly to a meeting. Cosgrave and O'Higgins called for me in a taxi. When we arrived the President told us that Michael Collins was over specially he believed about the wire to Rome. When Mr. Collins turned up however he said never a word about the telegram -- told us some of the doings in London -- the respective attitudes of some of the English Ministers and so on. Then he asked the President to go back with him to London. The President refused saying he ^{saw} ~~was~~ no necessity. He added however that if he were shown at any time that his presence was really required he would certainly go over.

It was probably prior to this that we had to pull up delegates for giving in to much to the English in important matters connected with liaison work. Mr. Duggan was the person chiefly responsible in this respect. I was astounded one day when the President read a communication which stated that the Republican Courts might continue to function but that no decrees were to be enforced. I swore, I think anyway I tendered my resignation which the President refused to accept saying that he was in perfect agreement with me. Whatever he wrote to London I never

knew but I heard no more on the subject.

Then there was an equally vital question relating to defence. Our people in London without consulting the Minister of Defence agreed that there were to be no more arms imported into Ireland. Cathal Brugha was very angry as to this and was at first inclined to ignore the arrangements altogether. Ultimately he reluctantly submitted to it except with regards to certain consignments for which he had already contracted.

I remember late one night after eleven o'clock the Chief of Staff (Mr. Mulcahy) and the Adj. General (Mr. O'Sullivan) drove up to the house where I was staying and entered in haste. They asked me whether I was not holding a court next day at Mullingar and on my saying that perhaps such a court was being held (I could not say for certain such was the volume of the work) they asked me to stop it. I inquired "why" Mulcahy said "There's a question being asked in the House of Commons tomorrow about the matter and we want to enable Greenwood to say that there is no such court to be held". I told him I would do nothing of the kind. "It will be attacked by the British so" said Mulcahy. "Let it be" I told him "in that case it will be suppressed by force, but I shall not let my courts close voluntarily to please the English". My two visitors then departed. My court at Mullingar was raided, but the judge and litigants moved elsewhere and transacted the business. I mention this episode to show the effect on some of our people of contact with the English in connection with liaison work and so on during the Truce.

Very soon after the 25th. Octr. incident the annual Ard Fheis of Sinn. Fein took place. At its conclusion -- about midnight -- the President delivered a stirring address to the delegates which was enthusiastically applauded. It was a die-hard speech -- no allegiance of any kind to any foreign authority.

In/^{the}face of all these -- the Pope's wire, the 25th. Octr. letter and the Ard Fheis speech -- if there) nothing else, how could any of the Plenipotentiaries imagine that they expected the President to be with them on the "Treaty"? and it is claimed that they did believe he would go with them. I fail to see any ground they had for such a hope.

Suddenly about the end of Octr. our detailed reports of full conferences between our "five" and the English Ministers ceased. Mr. Griffith wrote to us that Mr. Lloyd George had suggested that matters would progress more rapidly with smaller conferences and he suggested that Mr. Griffith and Mr. Collins should meet himself and another British Minister to discuss matters from that forth. Our delegates agreed to this unfortunately. Thence forward we had to depend upon an occasional short note or memo. from Mr. Griffith as to what had taken place at the conference of four.

Without documents to refer to I find it impossible to trace the negotiations through Novr. The documents are available however and when published will tell their own story.

There is one document however to which I must make reference before coming to the draft "Treaty" and its consideration by the cabinet. This was a memo. prepared by Mr. Chartris, Mr. Collins said. It came before us at a specially convened meeting towards the end of Novr. Mr Collins was over and in attendance. There was reference in the document to a contribution towards the King's household, or something of the kind. Cathal Brugha at once objected and said he would never consent to anything of the kind. Mr. Collins said that was a pity, as he feared the document had by this time -- looking at his watch -- been handed into Downing Street. Cathal Brugha became very angry and I did my best to throw oil on the troubled waters.

This was the first instance of the fait accompli succeeding in the

game, but we did not see this at the time. We trusted our colleagues in London implicitly.

About the end of Novr. the President left Dublin for the South and West on a tour of Army Inspection accompanied by the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff. He addressed the troops in various places and prepared them for a renewal of war. (It was evident that there could be no agreement in London. The English were not ready to come to the point beyond which we would not touch without dishonour, ~~xxx~~ and if... England wanted more war well, all we could do was to defend our country's honour with our lives. This is not what Devalera told the troops -- It is a summary of my own of the situation of the time on which the Presidents' remarks were leased) Mulcahy also made war speeches.

When the President was leaving town he appointed me to take his place and directed that London dispatches should be sent me.

I think it was about the 30th. Novr. and in the night time that Mr. Cosgrave came out to my place and handed me a dispatch from the Plenipotentiaries which had come addressed to him. He asked me did I mind its being so addressed. Of course I did not. We looked at the contents which were urgent -- being nothing less than the draft "Treaty" and a letter from Mr. Griffith asking to have a meeting on Saturday 3rd. Decr. and that he and all his colleagues would be ever for it.

First thing next morning I caused the Pres. and the Minister of Defence to be wired for and they arrived on Friday. Mr. Griffith came over on Friday also and the President and himself were closeted together on that night for a considerable time.

Now we come to the meeting of Saturday the 3rd. of Decr. 1921. All the Cabinet Ministers were present, as well as Mr. O'Higgins. The Plenipotentiaries who were not in the Cabinet and Mr. Erskine Childers Secretary to the Delegation were also in attendance. The proceedings opened at 10 or 11 O.C. in the forenoon and lasted throughout the day until about 6 O.C. P.M. when the meeting concluded, just in time to enable the delegates or some of them to catch the night mail back to London.

The discussion throughout was on the main questions -- allegiance to the British Crown and Partition -- The President said he might understand Mr. Griffith giving up Independence for National Unity, but "you have got neither this nor that". Griffith argued all day in favour of acceptance and said it was the utmost limit to which the British could be got to travel. Both Barton and Gavin Duffy differed from him on this. Collins did not speak strongly in favour of the document at all. Eventually the President took the individual views of most of those present. I remember he did not appeal to me at all. Towards the end however Griffith was still persisting that the document should be signed, saying he would not take the responsibility of breaking on the question of the Crown. Then Cathal Brugha turned to him saying "Dont you realize that if you sign this thing you will split Ireland from top to bottom". The truth seemed to strike Griffith very forcibly and he said "I suppose that's so" I'll tell you what I'll do I'll go back to London I'll not sign the document but I'll bring it back

and submit it to the Dail and if necessary to the people. That was quite satisfactory to everybody and there was no necessity in face of the pledge thus given to substitute delegates to go over for the purpose of breaking off the negotiations.

During the discussions that day it had been indicated what terms would be acceptable to a united Cabinet -- the idea of External Association.

This was by no means new as it had been spoken of before even the Delegates left Ireland in Octr. The Delegates were instructed to lay there^M as our final proposals before the British at once.

The draft "Treaty" before us on Decr. 3rd. contained a form of oath not the same as that as put in to the signed document but differing not very much from it. At the meeting Cathal Brugha objected to any form of oath. Of course he said if the British wanted an oath from us to respect whatever "Treaty" was made we might give it provided they swore to us in return. The President also wanted to know where lay the need for an oath of any kind. Mr. Collins said it was to be sugar coating to enable the English people to swallow the pill. "Well" said the President "if it be really necessary and that we get all else we want, what harm would it be if we had an oath like this:" and he spoke words paraphrasing the form in the draft "Treaty" Cathal still persisted in refusing to consider any form of oath whatever and there the matter ended. I agreed with the President, but I was not long realizing that Cathal was right.

The Plenipotentiaries next morning in London prepared the final proposal from our side for submission to the English. These are the terms which Mr. Duggan in Dail Eireann described as "meaning the Republic". They are the same terms which formed the basis of "Document No (2)". It was after much hesitation that Mr. Griffith accompanied Messrs Barton and Gavin Duffy to present them to Lloyd George. Mr. Griffith by account did not put his heart into the Argument. Negotiations were broken off and our delegates prepared for return home.

Now Mr. Collins did not go over with the others on Sat. night. He reached London on Monday morning and negotiations were reopened by him. They broke down again during the day however and were regarded as finally closed.

On that night (Dec. 5th.) I was attending an opera at the Gaiety Theatre. At its conclusion I found Gearoid O'Sullivan and Sean O'Murthuille waiting for me. The latest news from London, Gearoid said was to the effect that the negotiations were off and the Plenipotentiaries returning. He added that the Auxiliaries seemed to be at work already as they were all about the city armed and interfering with people. He warned me not to stay at my usual quarters that night. I said that I'd take the chance as it was too late to look up another place. And so home I went and to bed.

Next morning I was called and told there was important news in the paper and it was sent up to me before I had time to dress. There on the back page of the "Independent" under "Latest News" was a paragraph saying that a settlement had been reached and an agreement signed between

the British and Irish reprs. at 2.30 O'C. that morning. I did not know what to think. Then when I remembered Griffith's pledge on Sat. Evg. I was delighted for I thought the English had given in to our terms. And so I lived that day until I got an evening paper containing a report of a speech delivered by Lord Birkenhead in which he stated Ireland was to have the status of a British Colony. Then I felt really sick, and it was as a man in bad temper I proceeded to the Mansion House that night to attend the Dante Celebration at which the President who was coming up from Limerick for the purpose was to preside.

Awaiting the President's arrival the Lord Mayor invited Cathal Brugha and myself into his study. It was late when the motor arrived from Limerick. The first question the President asked was "Any news?". I said "Yes" "Good or bad" "Bad" I was about to shew him the evg. paper when I decided to leave it alone until after the meeting. He donned his gown (University) and was about to lead the way into the round room when who should arrive but Mr. E.J. Duggan and Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald. Duggan reached the President an envelope which the President ignored. Duggan asked him to read the contents. "What should I read it for?" "Oh" said Duggan "it is arranged that the thing be published in London and Dublin simultaneously at 8 O'C. and it is near that hour now" "What said the President "to be published whether I have seen it or not" "Oh well, that's the arrangement" Duggan replied. The President took up the envelope opened it, glanced over the contents. Then he came over to where I was leaning on the mantelpiece, and putting his back to the fire said -- looking down at his Professor's gown "I see myself in three week

-- back in these, teaching". At the moment he appeared to me to be an almost broken man.

I should have mentioned that before Devalera opened the dispatch I said to Duggan " Surely ye didn't make that settlement" "What settlement" he asked "Is such and such an oath in it?" "I asked "Oh yes" "And the recognition of the Crown" "Yes" "Then why did ye sign? How could ye?" "It was war in five minutes" he said "unless we signed. Barton's report approved and forwarded by Griffith aff all that took place from Sun. to Tues. morning is very interesting reading.

A few minutes later we proceeded into the Round Room and I tried to listen to the different papers read on the author of the Divine Comedy. I half expected President to say something to warn the people against the so called settlement but he never opened his mouth during the proceedings save to introduce the speakers. Afterwards Cathal and myself met him in the study but little or nothing was said. We were too full of disappointment.

The President called a Cabinet meeting next day, Wed. the 7th. Cathal Brugha, Cosgrave (with O'Higgins) and myself were present. The Plenipotentiaries had not yet returned from London where they had been giving interviews showing what an "amount of Freedom" Ireland had won under the "Treaty". Mr. Cosgrave suggested we should await their arrival, and the President summoned them back by wire for a Cabinet meeting to take place next day the 8th. "to consider the circumstances under which the Plenipotentiaries had signed the agreement in London". These or some such words appeared in the official notes which he drafted for pub-

lication. Desmond Fitzgerald who was in charge of publicity, came into the room immediately the note had been handed him and he said, "This might be altered Mr. President. It reads as if you were opposed to the settlement" "And that is the way I intend it to read. Publish it as it is" the President told him.

Fitzgerald said aside to me a few minutes later "I did not think he was against this kind of settlement before we went over to London" I answered "He is dead against it now anyway. That's enough". I should have mentioned that the document brought by Duggan to the President a signed counterpart of the agreement. The word "Treaty never occurred in it from beginning to end and of course it was not a Treaty in form or otherwise. But after Duggan's departure from London it struck someone that the word "Treaty" would be useful for propoganda purposes, and they saw the British about it. This is how the matter is repaired. The original document is headed "Articles of Agreement". Now a fly leaf was put in like the title page of a book containing something like this: "In the matter of a Treaty between Great Britian and Ireland.

Articles of Agreement".

And on the strength of this and of the fact that in the British House of Commons it was referred to as Arts. of Agreement for a "Treaty" the attempt has been and is still being persisted in to call the abortion a Treaty.

The Plenipotentiaries all returned in time for Thursday's Cabinet

Meeting. The attendance was complete: President, Griffith, Brugha Collins Cosgrave Barton and myself; of the Cabinet Gavan Duffy and Duggan --Plenipotentiaries, O'Higgins whilst Erskine Childers had also been asked to attend.

The meeting lasted the whole day and late into the night. Strangely enough we were not unfriendly towards one another. The merits and demerits of the Agreement were gone into, but not in detail to any extent. The main thing was how they came to sign. Mr. Griffith if I remember aright would not admit duress by the British, Mr. Collins said if there was duress it was only "the duress of the facts" whatever he meant by that. But both Barton and Gavan Duffy were candid and said that they had been forced to sign. On and on dragged the discussion the President, Cathal and myself doing our best to get the others not to press the document on the Dail. I thought Collins was seeing the trouble ahead once -- I turned to him and said imploringly "You have signed and undertaken to recommend the document to the Dail. Well, recommend it. Your duty stop there. You are not supposed to throw all your influence into the scale. "I believe" I added "if the Dail rejects this we will be in a better position than we were and England will have only made a trap for herself by her action. Will you do it?" To my surprise he made a reply which seemed unworthy of him and I pursued the matter no further. "Where would I be then" he growled That ended it. The meeting ended sometime too. A division was taken -- Griffith Collins Cosgrave and Barton voting one way and the President Cathal and myself the other.

Barton explained that he thought he was bound to vote for the document having signed it and undertaken to recommend it

Immediately after the meeting the President wrote a letter to the press explaining his position and that of Cathal Brugha and myself. This appeared on the 9th. Decr. Meantime the "Treaty" and all the propaganda in its favour had three days start and we never made up the handicap. The British and Irish press carried the people off their feet in favour of the "Treaty and Peace".

I think that about ends the story of the negotiation so far as my memory -- a not too good one -- goes. I shall not attempt to go into the particulars of the Dail debates on the subject. These -- or most of them can be got from the public press. Perhaps the reports of the secret sessions may also be published one day. And I shall be greatly surprised if, after perusal of all the material, the historian of the future does not give an emphatic verdict of "Guilty" against the men who from Dec. 1921 onward took part in the attempt to destroy the Irish Republic.

I had nearly forgotten to relate my other experiences of Mr. Cope. I have spoken of his attempt to meet me in May. I think it was about August he made his next effort. A prisoner named Joseph Griffin, a friend of mine had got out on parole. He applied for an extension and saw Cope. It transpired that Griffin and I were friends. Cope said it would be all right but he wished to speak to me. I declined to meet him and Cope in his anger refused to grant the extension and Griffin had to return to prison.

Another effort was made soon after through the medium of a certain professional gentleman of the South of Ireland of my acquaintance. This time the attempt was to get me to meet Mr. Cope and Mr. James Mc.Mahon -- I positively refused saying Ireland had her selected reprs. to meet those of Britian.

I think I had better set out the final effort in further detail. Early in the day of ^{Thurs.} ~~Thurs.~~ Decr. 1st. a certain civil servant -- a friend of mine and also intimate with Mr. Mc.Mahon -- called on me and said McMahan and Cope wished to speak to me very particularly. The matter was most urgent practically life and death. I refused blankly saying I would see no emissaries of Dublin Castle. This gentleman called me up again about 7 O'C. that evg. and apologized for repeating his request but he said the two Under Secs. attached the highest importance to their meeting me. He named the Hotel Russell as rendez vous. I believe I was very rude in the reply I sent thro' this time across the wires.

I had a meeting of the Sinn Fein Standing Cttee. that night

that I had an appointment to meet a friend from Kerry at the Gresham Hotel. It was about ten O'C. when I reached the Gresham and entering the lounge who should I see with my friend but Mr. McMahon. My friend went away leaving us together. He had met McMahon let drop that he expected me and McMahon also said he wished to speak to me on important business. The moment we were together I said "Mr. McMahon this is very unfair to be hunting me about like this when you know I do not want to see you" He replied that the matter was awfully important. "Here we were on the point of breaking off negotiations on a small point". I asked him "What do you consider a small point?". He then pretended not to know what was the obstacle and I said he knew well enough. He said if negotiations fell through England would wage war ruthlessly and thousands of lives would be lost. "Very well" I said "let them start. We can play at that game too. And I can tell you" I added "there may not be a man in England's service in Ireland left alive when all is over" This staggered him. I also told him that rather than that we should swear allegiance to England I would be willing to see every member of Dail Eireann shot down "out there in O'Connell St.". This ended our conversation and we parted. If he had hoped to put the "wind up" he was mistaken, but I think he felt a breeze himself before he left.

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