

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. **W.S. 459**

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S.** 459.....

**Witness**

P.S. O'Hegarty,  
Highfield House,  
Highfield Road,  
Rathgar, Dublin.  
**Identity**

Member of Supreme Council of I.R.B.

**Subject**

The British Oath of Allegiance  
1918.

**Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness**

Nil

File No. **S.49**.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 459

Memo.

The Oath Telegrams, 1918.

This arose out of a resolution calling for it, proposed and seconded in the House of Commons in the early part of August, 1918, by private members, and accepted by all parties.

I was at the time on holiday at Postlewood with my wife, and read the report in the Press. I judged from the debate in the House and the speeches of the leading members of all parties that the Oath would be imposed, and I at once sent in my resignation, stating the reason, protesting against the imposition of an oath, and pointing out that it was a breach of the agreement made with me when I entered the service in 1897, I having solemnly observed the only condition then imposed, that of Secrecy.

I seem to remember that it was dated 13th August, 1918, thus placing the proceedings in the House on the 12th.

After that I have no first hand knowledge.

I believe there was some opposition in the General Staff it was not necessary in the lower grades, by some of the strong divisions on the other side, but I do not remember any organized opposition here.

But, in the end, the oath was applied in the clerical and executive and higher grades only, clerks like adult messengers, postmen, sorting clerks, telegraphists, being exempted. And also I think there was some sort of affirmation, short of an oath, accepted here.

The whole of the information desired may, however, be obtained from the Department of Finance.

In 1922 one of the first things done was to review the cases of the men who were deemed for refusing the oath or upon dismissal a resignation was due to political circumstances.

I was Chairman of a small body of highly placed Civil Servants who investigated all the cases, both clear cases and doubtful ones, and made recommendations on them to the Minister. I forgot the exact title of the Committee, but it was familiarly referred to as the "Victimisation" Committee, and it should be easy to find it from the records in Finance.

Full statements and reports were made, and we were given every assistance by the British authorities, the personnel files of the Officers concerned being forwarded where desired.

The number of people who actually refused the oath was very small, round about a dozen, I think. Most of those who applied for reinstatement were people who retired "to better my position" or "for reasons of health" and soon, not having the courage to actually

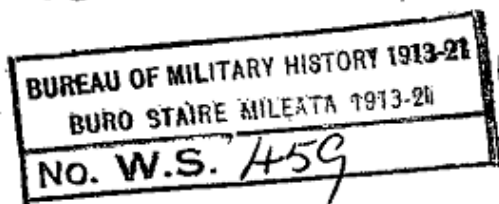
refuse the vote. Many of the men, of course,  
motivated by political motives, even when there  
was no actual affiliation to the national  
movement and the benefit of the doubt was  
given in those cases.

There was a second Victim/Benefit Committee  
later, after the Civil War had completely  
died down, of which I was also Chairman,  
and some genuine cases, who had not applied  
to the first Committee in 1944 because they  
were then in the irregulars, were considered.

And there was a third, after France had  
been OKed, which reinstated many people  
who had no real claim at all. I think a  
politician was the Chairman of it - I was  
not a member.

*Historically*

*S. J. 50*



# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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No. W.S. 459

## The Oath of Allegiance, 1918.

This arose out of a resolution calling for it, proposed and seconded in the House of Commons in the early part of August, 1918, by private members, and accepted by all parties.

I was at the time on holiday at Portstewart with my wife, and read the report in the Press. I judged from the debate in the House and the speeches of the leading members of all parties that the Oath would be imposed, and I at once sent in my resignation, stating the reason, protesting against the imposition of an Oath, and pointing out that it was a breach of the agreement made with me when I entered the Service in 1897, I having scrupulously observed the only condition then imposed, that of secrecy.

I seem to remember that it was dated 13th August, 1918, thus placing the proceedings in the House on the 12th.

After that I have no first-hand knowledge.

I believe that there was some opposition, on the ground that it was not necessary in the lower grades, by some of the strong Unions on the other side, but I do not remember any organised opposition here.

But, in the end, the Oath was applied in the clerical and executive and higher grades only, classes like Adult Messengers, Postmen, Sorting Clerks, Telegraphists, being exempted. And also I think there was some sort of affirmation, short of an Oath, accepted here.

The whole of the information desired may, however, be obtained from the Department of Finance.

In 1922 one of the first things done was to review the cases of the men who were dismissed for refusing the Oath, or whose dismissal or resignation was due to political circumstances. I was Chairman of a small body of highly placed Civil Servants who investigated all the cases, both clear cases and doubtful ones, and made recommendations on them to the Minister. I forget the exact title of the Committee, but it was familiarly referred to as the "Victimisation" Committee, and it should be easy to find it from the records in Finance.

Full statements and reports were made, and we were given every assistance by the British authorities, the personal files of the officers concerned being forwarded where desired.

The number of people who actually refused the Oath was very small, round about a dozen, I think. Most of those who applied for reinstatement were people who retired "to better my position", or "for reasons of health" and so on, not having the courage to actually refuse the Oath. Many of them were, of course, motivated by political motives, even where there was no actual affiliation to the National movement, and the benefit of the doubt was given in those cases.

There was a second Victimisation Committee later, after the Civil War had completely died down, of which I was also Chairman, and some genuine cases, who had not applied to the first Committee in 1922 because they were then in the Irregulars, were considered.

And there was a third, after Fianna Fáil took office, which reinstated many people who had no real claim at all. I think a politician was the Chairman of it - I was not a member.

(Signed) P.S. O'Hegarty.

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Dec. 50.