

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
NO. W.S. 622

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 622

Witness

Dublin Board of Assistance,
1 James's Street,
Dublin.

Identity.

Subject.

Occupation of South Dublin Union by
the Irish Volunteers, Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1881

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

Phone No. 52044

THE DUBLIN BOARD OF ASSISTANCE

Secretary's Office

Board Room

1 JAMES'S STREET, DUBLIN

BOIRD CÚNAIM BAILTE ÁTA CLIAIC,

OIFIS AN RÚNAIRE,

SEOMRA AN BUIRO,

STRAID SEAMUS.

~~Secretary of the Board~~
~~JAMES'S STREET, DUBLIN~~

See 8.12.51

Please quote ref: A/1478.

22nd November, 1951.

The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
Bureau of Military History 1913/21,
26, Westland Row,
DUBLIN.



Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter, dated 5th November, 1951. The Irish Republican Army of 1916, in which the Irish Volunteers were an integral part, occupied several buildings throughout the South Dublin Union which included all that part of the City of Dublin south of the River Liffey. The Board of Guardians of the South Dublin Union would, in the subject matter of your enquiry, have been concerned only with those buildings in their charge which were occupied by either The Irish Republican Army or the British Imperial Army. I assume, however, that your enquiry refers to the Workhouse of the South Dublin Union at Mount Brown. I have had made a search of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Guardians of the South Dublin Union following the rising of 1916. The only references therein to the occupation of buildings during the Rising are contained in the Minutes of the 3rd and 10th May, 1916 in reports submitted to the Board by the Clerk of the Union and the Master of the Workhouse. The reports appear to be of little historical and almost negligible military value. I enclose copies for your information, and, if so desired, the originals may be seen here by arrangement.

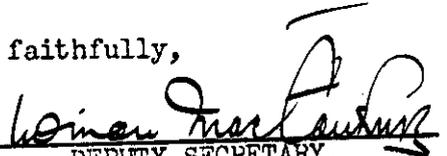
The Workhouse of the North Dublin Union also was occupied during the Rising by The Irish Republican Army. Subsequently on the 1st September, 1918 the Workhouse buildings were occupied by British armed forces, the North Dublin Board of Guardians was abolished, and the North Dublin Union amalgamated with the South Dublin Union to form a new body, designated the Dublin Union. The Minutes of the North Dublin Board of Guardians, which are in my custody here, do not include any reference to the occupation of the Workhouse of the North Dublin Union in 1916.

As you are doubtless aware, the original Certificates of Deaths in the Dublin Union - that is the area formally comprising the North Dublin Union and the South Dublin Union and now designated the Dublin Public Assistance District - from the commencement of registration are housed in the office of the Superintendent Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages at this address. They include the original registrations of the deaths by execution of most of those who

were executed by the British armed forces during the period 1916 to 1921. In fact, the deaths of only three of those executed in 1916 appear to be registered, viz., Sean Heuston, Thomas McDonagh and James Connolly. These, and other such Certificates, might be made available for inspection, and I have no doubt that, if you so desired, certified or photostatic copies, might, with the permission of the Registrar-General, be made available for your records.

I shall be very happy to be of further assistance to you.

Yours faithfully,


DEPUTY SECRETARY.

LH/MO'R.



Encls. (2)

DUBLIN BOARD OF ASSISTANCE

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF GUARDIANS OF THE

SOUTH DUBLIN UNION

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-2

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 622

1. Special Meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd May, 1916

Clerk's Report (Page 540)

....."The Clerk also pointed out that, owing to the Workhouse premises being occupied by armed forces, no meeting of the Guardians could be held on Wednesday, 26th April, 1916....."

2. Board Meeting held on the 10th May, 1916.

Clerk's Reports (Page 549)

He begs to report that on Thursday, the 20th April, 1916, having finished the work of the office, and saw everything belonging thereto put safely in its proper place, he locked up the office for the Easter holidays. In the ordinary course of business he should have returned on Tuesday, the 25th April, 1916, and opened the office for the conduct of the Union business, but on Monday evening the 24th April, 1916, he was informed that the Workhouse Buildings were in the possession of a strong body of armed Volunteers, and were being opposed by the Military Forces of the Crown, and this condition of things continued up to Sunday evening, the 30th April, 1916, upon which date the Insurgent Volunteers surrendered.

On Tuesday, the 2nd May, 1916, after considerable trouble he was enabled to reach the office and found the same in a deplorable state. The windows were riddled with bullet holes, all the presses and cabinets were broken open, and their contents scattered broad cast over the whole place, the furniture was used apparently for barricades, the Minute Books, Account Books, files, papers, Vouchers etc., supplemented with sand, clay, stones and other materials were in, and through the windows for a like purpose. The office door was forced, and the wall between his office and the District Council Buildings was pierced, and an attempt was made at the end of the Board Room passage to pierce into a Ward in the Healthy Ward.

Two of the temporary Assistants of his office staff viz., Condon and Maginn turned up and with their help, he was attempting to reduce the place to some order, and was actually taking the Minute Books from the windows where they were used as barricades and bore evidence of their use as such, many of them being pierced with bullet holes, but as he was commencing to do this work, the Chairman, Mr. Scully, J.P., called, saw the state of the place and advised him to stay his hand until the Guardians saw the condition of the premises, and for that purpose directed him to summon a Special Meeting of the Guardians for the next day Wednesday, the 3rd May, 1916. He at once proceeded to carry out these instructions, and as there was no postal system working he had the notices to the Guardians delivered by himself, his Assistant, A.G. Condon, and official Messenger Tannam, personally and before he left the office that evening Mr. C. H. O'Connor called. He told him what he had done, and he expressed his approval thereof.

On the next day, Wednesday, the 3rd May, 1916, a large number of the Guardians attended who saw the state of the premises and transacted the business already set forth in the Minutes which he has just read for the Board.

After the Guardians concluded their business he at once got his staff (who were now all present) and with the aid of ~~him~~ some inmates proceeded to put the place in order, and this he has continued to do up to the present, and from the state of the Books, papers and accounts, it will occupy his attention for some considerable time longer.

He communicated with Mr. J. A. Reddy, Local Government Board Auditor, who previous to the Easter holidays, had been engaged auditing the Union Accounts for the half-year ending the 31st March, 1916, to come in and see the state of the accounts and vouchers were in and he (Mr. Reddy)

(having

having done so, on Monday the 8th May, directed the Clerk to get them in order, and notify him when he had done so.

Having directed the Clerk of Works to have the opening between his office and the District Council Office closed up, and generally to repair the damage done to the office, first taking an inventory and valuation of same for the information of the Police and Military Authorities, said opening has now been closed up, further very little damage was done to the Board Room beyond the perforation of one of the windows by a bullet and the use of the chairs as barricades,

(ORDER) CLERK'S ACTION APPROVED.

Master's Report (Page 553)

That on Easter Monday last, 24th April, 1916, about 11.30 a.m. a number of armed men estimated as from 70 to 100 "Sinn Feiners" - Irish Volunteers, entered the Workhouse premises by the Gate at James' St. and the gate at Rialto, Kilmainham, about the same time. They seized the keys and took possession of the Gate Lodges and Offices adjoining also the Clerk's Offices and Board Room, etc., in James's St. also the Night Nurses Home, the occupants of which they summarily ejected and at once proceeded to fortify the same, they also occupied portion of the Male Lunatic Department, Kilmainham, where they were shortly afterwards attacked by the Military, when a sharp exchange of shots took place in this fight two British Officers and one Sinn Feiner, were shot dead, they also entered Hospital No. 2 and were pursued by soldiers, the latter it is stated they shot Miss Margaret Kehoe, your Nurse in charge.

(ORDER) SEE RESOLUTION.

The Sinn Feiners also passed through the Protestant and Roman Catholic Hospitals, and took refuge in the Officer's Quarters, Orchard Sheds Department in which they remained till the following Tuesday morning, meanwhile the Military occupied all the Workhouse premises and grounds save the front offices and the Night Nurses Home, which remained in possession of the Invaders from Monday till the following Sunday evening 5 p.m. when they surrendered to the Military and left.

He cannot too strongly praise the courage and devotion to duty of the great majority of the Workhouse Staff, Ministers, Priests, Nuns, Storekeepers and His Assistants, Wardmasters, Wardmistresses, Nurses etc., they all behaved splendidly under very trying circumstances also some of the inmates.

Whilst it is invidious to mention names he cannot refrain from mentioning the Master Baker and his two Assistants Kynes and Kelly, who attended here daily and with the assistance of Inmates, kept the Bakery running with the result that we had plenty of Bread not alone for our own requirements But were able to give to the poor and others who were unable to procure Bread elsewhere for love or money.

On Tuesday, he had the dead bodies of the Volunteers collected and brought to a temporary Morgue near the Back Gate, where all save one have since been identified.

Some of the nurses have lost their belongings, clothes etc., save those in which they were dressed.

The Carpenters were employed in making coffins 14 of which he supplied to the Public Health Department.

You were fortunate in having a fairly good supply of food stuffs on hands. However, the sugar ran short. Oatmeal and Potatoes ran out last week. He procured potatoes from the Government Depot, Park Gate

(St.

St. (through Captain Downey) also some Butter, Yeast and Bacon.

He obtained Oatmeal through Messrs. Kavanagh, Francis St. at 23/s. per Cwt., Margarine at 80/s. per Cwt.

He received a requisition from Captain Downey to issue to Mr. John Scully, a quantity of coal, beef, bread and oatmeal, which he duly honoured. He (the Master) issued to Mr. Fagan, Master of the North Dublin Union, for the use of their Schools at Cabra, 220 lbs. of Beef, also bottle of Altar Wine, and he received from Mr. Fagan two bags of Sugar (4 Cwt.)

He arranged with Messrs. Shackleton, Lucan, for a supply of Flour (temporarily) to date. He has written to several millers for a quotation for 50 tons as usual.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. Higgins, seconded by Miss Buchanan and passed unanimously:-

"That the Board of Guardians desire to place on record their high appreciation of the conduct of the Master, (Mr. Doyle) and the Workhouse Staff, during the very trying period through which they have passed consequent upon the Workhouse being one of the worst centres of the recent rebellion. Through their exertions the patients and inmates of the Workhouse were looked after as well as the circumstances would permit and to relieve other persons who were unable to obtain bread and other food stuffs."

Moved by Mr. Scully, seconded by Mr. Shea, J.P., D.L., and passed unanimously:-

"That this Board of Guardians desires to convey to Capt. Downey and his Staff, their best thanks for his kindness and the promptitude with which he supplied the Workhouse with any available provisions and necessaries in the recent crisis."

