

W.S. 913

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 913

ORIGINAL

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 913.....

Witness

Very Rev. T.J. Shanley (and others)
216 West 68th Street, N.Y.,
New York (23),
U.S.A.

Identity.

Close associate of leaders of
Irish Party in New York, 1919.

Subject.

Mr. de Valera's visit to New York,
1919-1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2191.....

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De Valera starting from Ireland - June 1919:

De Valera travelled from Dublin to Liverpool as a regular passenger, and MacMahon, then Under Secretary for Ireland, was on the same ship going across to Holyhead. They went as far as Crewe where they had to change trains for London and Liverpool, De Valera being given to understand that MacMahon was going to London.

After arriving at Liverpool De Valera went to Dick Lanagan's (Lanagan was a Custom House man in Liverpool and an I.R.B.), and met "Barney" Downs who was bos'un of the "Lapland". She was carrying Canadian troops back from London to the United States. De Valera was dressed as a sailor in overalls and an old cap. He went down to the landing stage and boarded the tender with several other sailors. As they came alongside the "Lapland" there was some confusion aboard; "Barney" spotted several detectives (Moore and McCoy) and said: "There is something wrong, Chief - there are swarms of detectives aboard but we've got to face it". They boarded the "Lapland", and met the first officer, Henshaw, who said: "Downs, get your man back aft as quickly as possible". Downs said: "What's the trouble, Mr. Henshaw?"; and Henshaw replied: "They are looking for a soldier who killed a woman in Liverpool last night and are searching the ship for him". De Valera and "Barney" went aft and De Valera was put in an unused tank in the aft of the ship, with his overcoat and two sandwiches, one in each pocket. The search of the ship continued for some time, and finally the "Lapland" was made ready for the voyage.

Downs went down to see how the Chief was getting along and asked how everything was. "All right", said the Chief, "only for the rats. They've even eaten the sandwiches out of my pockets". Downs got a flashlight, gave it to the

Chief and told him to flash it when the rats came around and it would frighten them off.

Downs had an old fellow helping him on the voyage called "Frisco" Kennedy, as well as Dick O'Neill. "Frisco" was a lamp trimmer on the "Lapland" and they told him that the Chief was skipping to America as he had killed a couple of policemen in Ireland. He got very fond of the Chief and the Chief spent most of his time in the lamp room with "Frisco" during the day, nobody else being allowed in. During the voyage the Chief got very sick and they were afraid he would die. They decided that they had to get some brandy for him. (This was during Prohibition days.) "Frisco" suggested to Downs that he get it from a consignment going to Cuba. The keys were secured and Downs got out a case^x of the brandy. The Chief wouldn't take any of it, however, and soon recovered.

The Chief continued to spend most of his time in the lamp room with "Frisco" Kennedy; one day a young cadet came into the room and bolted the door. Kennedy struck the cadet and knocked him out cold. He reported to the chief officer who reported it to the captain, and the captain said: "He must have done something to that old man or he wouldn't have hit him". He sent for Kennedy who told him that the cadet had bolted the door. "Go back to your lamp room", said the captain, "and keep the cadets out. They have no business in there".

One night Kennedy, Downs and the Chief were sitting in the lamp room and the third officer came up and called Downs and Kennedy both out. They went out quickly and slammed the door after them, leaving the Chief inside. When they came back, the door was wide open and the lock was gutted and gone. The Chief was missing. Presently Downs heard someone whisper: "Barney." "Is that you, Chief?", said Barney.

* (Note: McGarity is supposed to have some of the case which was opened.)

"Yes, I'm up in the poop", answered the Chief, and he came down saying: "I never like to be in a place I can't get out of, so I gutted the lock".

There was a poor Welshman, a sailor, on the "Lapland" who nearly lost his life. It was his first voyage and every night he washed his clothes near where the Chief was. Kennedy said to Downs: "That fellow is no good - he is a spy". So they decided that one night when he was washing (on) the aft part of the deck, that Kennedy would push the Welsh sailor overboard. However, Downs found out that the Welshman was afraid his clothes would be stolen which accounted for his washing and drying them every night while he kept an eye on them. An so his life was saved!

De Valera in New York - June 1919:

When the "Lapland" arrived at New York, Joe McGarity, and Harry Boland who had come out about six months ahead, met the Chief at 21st or 22nd Street. The Chief came off the ship in the same old clothes with Downs, who had seen Joe and Harry beforehand. They went direct to 338 East 29th Street. Father Flanagan was out when they arrived but came in later. This was the first time Father Flanagan had seen the Chief for twenty years - since they were both at Blackrock College together. Archbishop Alex. MacDonald of Vancouver was staying at 338 at that time. He was inclined to be pro-British in his views and remarked that De Valera was doing a lot of harm to the Irish cause and the cause of civilization in general. De Valera began to talk with him, and they became fast friends and corresponded for years.

De Valera stayed at 338 for a few days. Then he went to Philadelphia with McCarthy who had bought clothes, travelling

bags, etc., for him. The first meeting^{*} at which De Valera appeared in public was at the Waldorf. Present were John Dooley, Father Shanley(?), Judge Cohalan, Spillane of Connecticut, and others.

Early in 1919 there was about \$919,000 collected in the Victory Fund. When Father Shanley was going home that summer, Harry Boland was on the same ship and he told Father Shanley about his first interview with Cohalan in regard to the money in the Fund. He said he went to see Cohalan who asked him what he wanted. Boland said that they intended to put up a fight in Ireland and needed funds and ammunition, that the people in Ireland were not able to put up the amount of money needed, and that for every British soldier in Ireland they were prepared to put an Irish one side by side with him, provided he had a gun to protect himself with. Cohalan said that the money in the Victory Fund would be needed in this country for educational purposes and propaganda. Boland said: "If we get the guns and ammunition we need, we will write Ireland's name on the front pages of the papers in blood". And Cohalan replied: "The Irish Republic doesn't exist. Ireland will never get anything, but the day is coming very soon when England and America will go to war. Then in the treaty between England and America, America will annex Canada, and then Ireland will get her freedom". Boland said: "I don't understand what you mean ..": Cohalan repeated his statement and Boland said: "Well, Judge, before your dream comes true, thousands of men will have died on the hillsides of Ireland without a gun to protect themselves with", and he left.

There was a meeting at which Cohalan left in protest. The question came up of appropriating a certain amount of money in the Victory Fund (75% to arm the men of Ireland,

* (Note: Check with Joe McGarity as to who were present at the meeting.)

and 25% to remain here for educational purposes and propaganda). The question came up again, this time of appropriating 25% of the money for Ireland. The 25% could probably be accounted for in the money which was loaned to De Valera here to inaugurate the bond issue and for a lease on 411 Fifth Avenue.

A meeting was held with some members of banks, etc., who wanted to get control of the Fund. De Valera insisted that he was here in the name of the people of Ireland and he wanted them to benefit by the funds which had been collected for them.

Meeting^x at the Murray Hill Hotel.

Seán Noonan came here as secretary to De Valera in June, 1919, about ten days after the arrival of De Valera.

De Valera's return to Ireland - December, 1920:

De Valera had decided to go home earlier than the time he actually went. (September was first decided on but he went in December.) It was known that the "Minnesota" was going to run between New York and London, and "Barney" Downs got a bos'un's job on her. He decided to make a trip and get fully acquainted with the ship. However, the "Minnesota" just went over and came back, and tied up. Downs called Caulfield and it was arranged that Downs would get a job on another ship because of the bos'un of that ship getting drunk and being unable to sail. This was settled and Downs went to Liverpool, signed on for the return trip, and when he returned everything was in order to take the Chief home.

Dick O'Neill and Humphreys (whom they doubted at first though it was proved that he was trustworthy throughout) took the Chief aboard. On the voyage he got sick again.

* (Check with Joe McGarity as to who were present at the meeting.)

At Southampton detectives poured on to the ship again. Downs and Humphreys outwitted them, however. Downs got arrested but was later released. Then he was rearrested. O'Neill got caught too. It was arranged to disembark De Valera in the following manner. He was to be sent down the hatch with blocks. He came up again and was put in a tank back aft. Some time before that the third mate had asked Downs to get him some corn brooms to send home. A laundry wagon used to come down to the ship to take the laundry away. So Downs said he would arrange to have the brooms taken off in the laundry wagon. It was arranged to keep the gangway clear until the third officer came down. Downs gave a signal to Humphreys, Humphreys got the Chief up (Humphreys had a loaded .45 in his pocket), took him down the gangway, out amongst the freight, and told him to hide behind the freight for the present. In the meantime detectives were ripping everything apart on the ship. After an hour had passed Humphreys took the Chief to his home in Liverpool under the name of "Barney Downs". The detectives, having no luck in their search, left to meet the "Aquitania" which was due in.

When the quartermaster called with a package for Humphreys, Mrs. Humphreys nearly gave the show away by mentioning that "Barney Downs" was upstairs sleeping (the quartermaster had just been speaking to him on the ship), but decided to say nothing. It had been arranged to take the Chief to Dublin that night stowed away in the mate's room of a ship. They told the mate it was a relative of Humphreys going to Dublin for Christmas. The mate got drunk in the meantime; during the night the captain came into the mate's room and seeing a man in the mate's bed he

shook him, thinking it was the mate, but De Valera pretended to be drunk, and the captain left him alone.

When the mate came back to his room, De Valera said:

"Believe me, you will pay for this in Dublin. You will be courtmartialled".

The following day Downs arrived in Dublin, bringing De Valera's coat. This was Christmas Eve, 1920.

Harry Boland's return to Ireland:

It was arranged for Liam Mellowes, Boland and McGee to meet at midnight at "Murphy's Cellar" in the basement at the corner of 56th Street and Third Avenue. Joe Hanson, McGee and all the crowd turned up. Boland said he wanted to sail the following Saturday for home. It had to be decided whether he would go as a passenger or as crew. McGee went to Jimmy Lynch and they found out that although the notice was very short, it might be possible to get him a job as mess man in the engineers room of a ship. They made up a story to get him the job - that he was a poor painter, his mother was dying, property to be attended to, no money, and badly in need of getting over to his mother before she died. So they decided to give him the name "Barney Downs" and fix a passport for him accordingly. Boland rehearsed the whole story in order not to make any mistakes. McGee went aboard the ship at sailing time and saw Joyce, the bos'un, who was a Scotch man. It was arranged that Boland would disembark at Southampton, and that the ship would make two trips before Boland would be ready to return on her. Boland returned on the same ship, in the same capacity, and Downs himself collected the wages for the two half trips, having exchanged passports in the meantime. While in Dublin, Boland met Cavanagh of the Cohalan group. (Check on details of this.)

Liam Mellowes' return to Ireland:

There was only a week's notice to prepare for this. Liam met McGee at the Waldorf and it was arranged to get him a job as mess man for the oilers. This was all worked out, and he arrived at Southampton and was met by Billy Dunn(?) who took whom to Mrs. Ahern's in London. He had a lot of equipment, compasses, high boots, etc., which were all taken off the ship in suit cases.

Peter McSwiney's return to Ireland:

McSwiney went the following week. He was an American citizen so there was not much trouble. He didn't like the idea of going as a stowaway. Joe Hanson did his best and McSwiney was taken aboard a ship at the last minute. As the ship was backing out, he stuck his head out of the porthole and almost gave the show away. They arrived at Southampton and Hanson put Peter on the train for London.

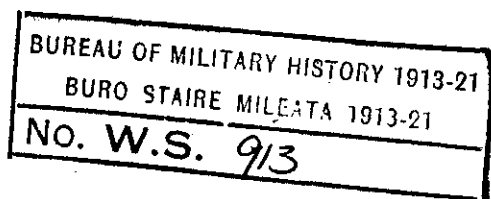
Mannix incident and results:

When the ship bringing Archbishop Mannix drew into San Francisco, the band played "America" which the Archbishop mistook for "God Save The King", and he didn't stand up. This started trouble. The Archbishop came on to New York (on his way to Ireland to see his mother).

Harry Boland called up McGee and they arranged to meet at 23rd Street and 11th Avenue. Boland said: "We're in a jam, Jim, and want to get out of it". He said that the Archbishop's passport was going to be stopped and that the ship would be held up. McGee said that things could be done. He got in touch with Mike Daly of the "Baltic" who got the oilers and firemen together; they decided to call a meeting at 5 o'clock the same day, put the case before the men, appoint delegates, and arrange a meeting at McGee's house. Boland appointed

three delegates - Kelly, Corrigan and one other. They came to McGee's house and met Boland, and arranged for signals. They arranged that, if the stewards revolted, the engineers would go out too. Boland gave Kelly \$200 and Kelly said: "We will stop at sea if necessary", but McGee said: "Take it easy - that would be mutiny". Nothing happened except that Archbishop Mannix was insulted. Off Cobh a British destroyer came alongside the ship and men thought that Archbishop Mannix was being given a special honor; actually he was taken off to Penzance. The people who were waiting to greet him at Liverpool were furious when the ship arrived and he was not there. The men brought the \$200 back and gave it to Boland. In the meantime, plans were being made in New York (Lynch and Boland) for a McSwiney-Mannix protest.

Lexington, Adelphi and Riverside Hotels - meetings.*
Rice, chairman, John Mulcahy, treasurer, and others.
Expenses were paid from a separate fund from 411 Fifth Avenue.



* (Note: Check on who were present.)