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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1661.

Witness

John Quinn,
County Home,
Ennis, 'Co. Clare.

Identity.

Senior Officer, Clare County Council.

Subject.

Local Government Administration, Co. Clare,
1912 - 1942.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 2583.

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURD STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1.661

STATEMENT BY JOHN QUINN,

Lemenigh, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare.

I was born at Lemenigh, Newmarket-on-Fergus, on the 3rd February, 1893. My father was a farmer. I was the youngest of a family of fourteen.

I received my primary education at the National School, Newmarket-on-Fergus, and my secondary education at the Christian Brothers, Ennis and Limerick. I did a commercial course at the Munster and Connaught College, Limerick.

In December, 1912, I was appointed Assistant Clerk of Ennis Union and Rural District Council. In December, 1918, on the death of the Clerk, I was appointed Clerk of these Bodies. I continued as Clerk of Union and District Council until January, 1922, when, on the amalgamation of the eight Unions in the county under the County Amalgamation Scheme, my office of Clerk of Union was abolished. In lieu of that office I acted as Secretary of the County Home, Ennis, and performed other duties in addition to Clerk of Ennis District Council.

In 1923 I was appointed Secretary to the Clare County Board of Health, which body now performed the duties of the abolished eight Boards of Guardians. In 1925 the nine Rural District Councils were abolished and also my office as Clerk of Ennis Rural District Council. The work of these Councils generally was also transferred to the Board of Health, of which I was Secretary. Under the County Management Act, 1940, the Board of Health was abolished on the 1st August, 1942, and work transferred to the County Council. My office

as Secretary was also abolished as from that date, and I was transferred to the County Council as Chief Officer, which office I still hold.

I resided at Lemenigh, Newmarket-on-Fergus, up to 1921.

I joined the Volunteers in 1913 and continued an active member for some years. Prior to Easter 1916 my residence at Lemenigh was used for storing ammunition, etc., for use at Easter in the intending conflict with the British forces. The local section of the Volunteers received their ammunition, etc., on Easter Sunday, at which I was present, my brother being a member of the section in question.

During the period I resided at Newmarket-on-Fergus I carried on numerous occasions dispatches from Comdt. M. Murray, Newmarket-on-Fergus, for delivery to Mid-Clare Brigade, as I travelled by cycle daily to work in Ennis. I also carried on my bicycle from Ennis to Newmarket-on-Fergus 200 rounds of .303 for attack on R.I.C. barracks at Sixmilebridge. I carried the ammunition and dispatches through the villages of Newmarket, Clarecastle and town of Ennis, which places were well supplied with enemy forces. My office in the Ennis Workhouse was constantly raided by enemy forces, principally because the Workhouse Master was Comdt. Frank Barrett, Mid-Clare Brigade. During these years I also did other little errands in the national interests.

In September, 1920, a definite break with the British Local Government Board took place in County Clare by the various local authorities, comprising the County Council, eight Boards of Guardians, nine Rural District

Councils and two Urban Councils. Although communications were received for some months after these Councils and Boards had decided to sever connections, they were not allowed to be read at meetings. The responsible officers of these authorities complied with the instructions issued by their respective Councils or Boards. When Inspectors or Auditors attended at the offices they were informed of the terms of the order and records or other documents were not produced to them. Minutes of Proceedings of Meetings were sent to a special address in Dublin for consideration by Dáil Éireann's Minister. All correspondence was similarly dealt with.

As Local Authorities had various loans for Government sources and repayments were now withheld, the services of their Treasurer (Bank) were dispensed with and funds there transferred to Trustees. This procedure was necessary as otherwise these funds would be garnished against amount due on foot of loans. The County Council, being the Rating Authority for the County, was responsible for supplying funds to the nine Rural District Councils and eight Boards of Guardians. Three Trustees were appointed by that Council and they were: Very Rev. Canon O'Kennedy, President of St. Flannan's College, D.H. McParland, Ennis, (later Senator), and Patrick O'Grady, Ennis. All accounts for goods supplied to institutions, salaries and wages were now paid in cash by the various Clerks of Unions and responsible officials of other Local Authorities. These funds were obtained in cash at certain centres by the officials in question, having been deposited there by specially appointed collectors. The official rate collectors were temporarily dispensed with, which was essential to relieve them of the terms of their bond. Councils and Boards were generally

financially embarrassed as the ordinary system of collection of rates had to be abandoned and grants previously obtained from the British Local Government were withheld. Local officials and employees were unpaid for months, and then only received a percentage of monies due to them. Contractors were in the same position, but all were anxious to assist and did not press for payment. As many members of the Councils and Boards were 'on the run' from the British forces, only those who were not known as "active" could attend meetings. The Chairman of the Clare County Council at that time (1920) was General Michael Brennan, then in command of the East Clare Brigade. Although he was a much wanted man, with other members of the Council he even attended a meeting at the Courthouse, Ennis, then headquarters of the British forces in the county. As the fight for independence progressed and the activities of the British forces increased, meetings of the County Council had to be held in the county under the protection of the I.R.A.

In September, 1920, Dáil Éireann circularised County Councils to consider the question of Poor Law Administration and accordingly a committee was set up for that purpose. As a result of various conferences with the Clerks of Unions and the R.M.S. and Asst. R.M.S., Mental Hospital, a scheme was submitted for the amalgamation of the various Poor Law services in the county which was adopted by the County Council with amendments on the 12th July, 1921. Under this scheme all the Workhouses in the county were closed except Ennis, which was converted into a County Home for the aged and infirm. The Workhouse Hospitals at Ennistymon and Kilrush were retained and called District Hospitals, and as Scarriff Workhouse had already been burned down, Mr. E. McLysaght

gave his Manor at Raheen for use as a temporary hospital for that area. This scheme was approved by Dáil Éireann Minister for Local Government, Mr. L.T. Cosgrave, on the 18th October, 1921.

In 1923 Dáil Éireann passed the Local Government Temporary Provisions Act 1923 which legalised all the County Council schemes in the State.

In 1925 a Comprehensive Local Government Act was passed which standardised many matters in connection with Local Government throughout the State. Under the act all Rural District Councils were abolished and their duties transferred to County Councils. Boards of Health were established and the members of these Boards were appointed by the County Councils. The duties of Boards of Health embraced a high percentage of those performed by the Rural District Councils, and the various committees appointed under the schemes legalised under the Local Government Temporary Provisions Act, 1923.

Boards of Health ceased to function in 1942 when the County Management Act came into force. Certain duties again reverted back to County Councils; others to be performed by County Managers.

Under the native Government great strides have been made in Local Government in County Clare. Thousands of houses have been provided in rural areas and also urban areas for the working classes, and generous grants with loans at moderate rates of interest are available to others for housing purposes. Public scavenging, public lighting, fire fighting services, water and sewerage schemes have been provided in a high percentage of the small towns and villages in the county by the County Council.

A new County Hospital and three modern type District Hospitals have been provided, also a County Sanatorium, and a Fever Hospital. Extensive improvements and additions have been carried out at the Mental Hospital. The County Home has been considerably improved and new dispensary depots erected also, and a new County Clinic. Six motor ambulances are available for transport of patients to the local or extern hospitals.

I attach as an appendix true copies of various resolutions passed, and orders made, by Ennis Board of Guardians relevant to the subject matter of this statement.

Signed: *John Quinn*

Date: *24 August 1957*

Witness: *M. MacLachlan*
(Investigator).

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAGE MILITA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1661

APPENDIX.

ENNIS BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

Meeting: 16th June, 1920.

Proposed by Mr. J. O'Grady) "That this Council of the
Seconded by Mr. J. Roughan) elected representatives of
the Ennis Board of Guardians at a duly convened meeting
hereby acknowledge the Authority of Dáil Éireann as the
duly elected Government of the Irish people, and undertake
to give effect to all decrees duly promulgated by the
said Dáil Éireann in so far as the same affects this
Council". That copies of this resolution be forwarded
to the Republican Minister for Foreign Affairs for
transmission to the Governments of Europe and to the
President and Chairman of the Senate and House of
Representatives of the U.S.A.

O R D E R E D: Adopted unanimously.

Members present at meeting:

In the Chair: Seán O'Keefe (Deputy Vice Chairman)
Messrs: - John McSherry,
D. McNamara,
P. Monaghan,
P. McMahon,
J. Roughan,
J. O'Geady,
P. Malley,
M. Hegarty,
M. Donoghue and
J. Ryan.

Meeting: 4th August, 1920.

26th July, 1920, from Secretary, Dáil Éireann,

Acknowledging with thanks the receipt of thirty copies of the resolution adopted by the Board acknowledging the authority of Dáil Éireann and stating that the necessary steps would be taken to forward same to the Governments of Europe and to the President and Chairman of the Senate and House of Representatives of the U.S.A.

O R D E R E D: "Approved".

29th July, 1920, from the Local Government Board, Dublin,

Stating that owing to the series of resolutions passed by certain local authorities in Ireland repudiating the authority of the British Parliament, no loans or grants will in future be made without a definite assurance of submitting accounts to audit and conforming to rules and orders as heretofore.

O R D E R E D: "Read".

Meeting: 20th August, 1920.

August, 1920 - From an Dáil Éireann,

Submitting scheme for the establishment of Conciliation Boards to deal with any dispute regarding working hours, pay, etc., which may arise.

O R D E R: "Scheme adopted unanimously".

Meeting: 4th September, 1920.

August, 1920 - From Dáil Éireann,

Circular letter with reference to members of the R.I.C. who obeyed the voice of conscience and the steps to be taken to find these men suitable employment.

O R D E R E D: "Circular adopted".

Meeting: 4th September, 1920.

Proposed by Mr. P. Malley) "That no minutes of
Seconded by Mr. D. McNamara) proceedings or returns be sent to the Local Government Board and we hereby order our Clerk to refuse to furnish or produce to any Local Government Inspector or Auditor any return or statement of accounts".

O R D E R E D: "Adopted unanimously".

Proposed by Mr. J. O'Grady) "That we the Ennis Board
Seconded by Mr. D. McNamara) of Guardians enter our most emphatic protest against the inhuman treatment meted out to the Lord Mayor of Cork by the British Government."

O R D E R E D: "Adopted unanimously".

Meeting held 18th September, 1920.

A number of letters from the Local Government Board came before the Board at their meeting on this date but the Board unanimously refused to allow any of the letters to be read. The last letter from the Local Government Board dated 17th August, 1920, read at a meeting of the Board of Guardians was on the 4th September, 1920, at which meeting it was unanimously decided to

have no further communication with that Board. Letters were received later from that Board but they were not read.

Contracts for supplies to the Workhouse were accepted on this date subject to the condition that no contractor should receive supplies from Belfast or firms imposing civil or religious tests on their employees.

Meeting, 2nd October, 1920.

Proposed by Mr. D. McNamara) "That we hereby notify the
Seconded by Mr. P. Malley) Provincial Bank, Ennis,
that their services as Treasurer to the Board will not
be required from this date and the Manager is required to
give public notice to this effect".

O R D E R E D: "Adopted unanimously".

Meeting, 16th October, 1920.

RESOLUTION: - That all returns and minutes formerly sent to the British Local Government Board be in future submitted to An Dáil.

6th October, 1920 - from Secretary, Clare County Council -

Stating with reference to circular from Dáil Éireann dated 30th September, 1920, on the general question of Poor Law Administration that a conference would be held at the Courthouse, Ennis, on the 18th October, 1920, and requesting delegates to be appointed with the Clerk with power to act for the Board.

ORDERED: - Messrs. M. Quinn, J. O'Grady, M. Casey with
Clerk of Union - J. Quinn - appointed.

Meeting, 13th November, 1920.

13th November, 1920 - From Hon. Sec., I.T. & G.W.U.,
Ennis Union Branch,

Stating that in order to help the Guardians in their financial difficulties they were prepared to sacrifice for the present the following proportion of their salaries viz.:

25%	on salaries up to £150.0.0.
30%	" " from £150. to £250.
33 $\frac{1}{3}$	" " over £250.

ORDERED: "Approved".

In this period the system of collection of rates was disorganised and Public Boards were short of funds for payment of their employees, contractors etc. Funds were only available for payment of outdoor relief and other urgent services.

Meeting: 27th November, 1920.

The Acting Master (J.J. Clohessy) reported that the Master of the Workhouse was absent from duty since Sunday, the 21st November, 1920.

ORDERED: - Acting Master and Mr. P. Moran to act as his substitute.

The Master above referred to was Frank Barrett, Commandant Mid Clare Brigade, and owing to the activity of the British forces he had to flee from his apartments in the early hours of Sunday, the 21st November, 1920, and go 'on the run' until the Truce.

Meeting, 15th January, 1921.

The Clerk reported that the temporary Assistant Master (J.J. Clohessy) was arrested on the 10th January, 1921, and that it was necessary to make suitable arrangements for the discharge of the duties performed by him.

ORDERED: - Mr. Moran to continue to perform the House duties and Mr. H. Hehir the clerical work.

Meeting, 5th February, 1921.

RESOLVED: - "That the Board of Guardians of Ennis Union hereby resolve that any monies paid by the Ennis Relief Committee to the destitute poor in the Ennis District heretofore paid outdoor relief be refunded to them as soon as we are in a position to do so. That we guarantee to the Relieving Officers who are continuing to pay outdoor relief (J. Moran and L. Hickie) any monies so expended by them.

Meeting, 5th March, 1921.

18th February, 1921 - From the Irish White Cross,
Mansion House, Dublin.

Forwarding an appeal issued to the Irish people and inviting the assistance of the Board to have a representative Committee formed in each parish as soon as possible - adding that the duties of the Committee would be to collect funds, inquire into cases of distress, distribute relief and provide employment.

ORDERED: - All members of the Board appointed on the Committee.

Inmates of the Ennis Workhouse at this time
numbered 310, comprised as follows: -

Able-bodied males	-	48
" " females	-	29
Infirm males	-	85
" females	-	74
Children up to 15 years	-	74

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 1661