

ORIGINAL

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S....353.....

Witness

Mr. James McGill,
Market Square,
Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Identity

O/C. Vol's. Dundalk 1918-19;
A/Brigade O/C. Louth I.R.A. 1919-20;
Head Centre I.R.B. Co. Louth 1919-20.

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- (a) National activities 1910-21;
- (b) Dundalk, Easter Week 1916;
- (c) Funeral and Inquest - T. Ashe;
- (d) Bye-elections 1918 and municipal elections
1920.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ..S.1406.....

ORIGINAL STATEMENT
OF

SEUMAS MacGUILL, MARKET SQ., DUNDALK.

I I, Seumas MacGuill, Market Square, Dundalk, herewith make this voluntary and to the best of my ability truthful statement of the History of the Louth Corps, in which I had the honour of serving during Ireland's fight for Independence. Relying absolutely on my memory without any dates to guide me I will confine myself to my own experiences, as I do not propose to deal with the activities generally of the Brigade which I had the privilege of serving as Acting Brigade Commandant.

2. I was very fortunate that the impressions made on my childmind were made by two men with whom I was subsequently to be very closely attached and whose honesty of purpose, bravery, sincerity and patriotism could never be questioned. Both of these men are now deceased and Ireland even to-day and Co. Louth in particular is the poorer by their absence for they both died for Ireland just as if they had died on the Battlefield, and which would have been their respective wishes. Their names were Thomas Hearty, Bridge Street and Patrick Hughes, Park Street, Dundalk.

3. In the early years of the present century I first made contact with these gallant men and the occasion was the 12th July. It appears that on the previous year when the Orange men of the North were celebrating the Battle of the Boyne in their customary way, and not satisfied with their usual cursing of the Pope, they made a sacriligious attack on the Catholic Churches and Catholic Houses of Warrenpoint and Rostrevor, and threatened to burn them. The Parish Priest of Rostrevor on this particular occasion called on volunteers to save the church which they did, and in spite of these outrages the Heads of the Orange order deliberately allowed

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their next annual demonstration to be fixed for Rostrevor.

4. To counteract this move and to support their fellow Catholics of Rostrevor, an excursion to Warrenpoint was organised in Dundalk by the Patrick Hughes already mentioned under the auspices of the Dundalk Young Mens Catholic Society, and it was only when it became known to the authorities that such a large contingent of 12 or 14 hundred people intended availing of this opportunity that the demonstration was proclaimed on the eve of the 12th July. The Steamer "Earl of Erne" sailed from Dundalk on the Sunday morning. It was customary at that time for Irish owned vessels to fly the British ensign but on this occasion for some unknown reason the Union Jack was also hoisted at the stern, and before the Steamer got very far out from Dundalk Bay this flag was objected to by the said Paddy Hughes already referred to, who removed it and threw it into the water. This caused a sensation on board with many people, who although militant Catholics they had imperialistic minds. Rumours began to come through to Dundalk that there were riots in Warrenpoint, and that the Catholic Church was burned, and immediately every man in Dundalk worth his salt was anxious to go to the assistance of their co-religionists, and to support their fellow-townsmen, who had already gone by Steamer that morning. Transport was very difficult to obtain, and all horse drawn vehicles in Dundalk were requisitioned, and it was at this stage that I first became acquainted with Tommy Hearty. Passing Market Square, Dundalk, on my return from drive with my brothers and sister, on a hackney car of which I had charge I noticed great commotion, and everybody looking for seats. Tommy Hearty approached me, told me to get the children down and ordered them to walk home, and

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instructed six men who were standing beside his own already loaded Hackney car to take their seats on mine, and asked me to follow him. We lead a procession of 10 or 15 heavily laden Hackney cars out the Newry Road, until we overtook some brakes, wagonettes, traps and Mineral Water Vans, loaded with provisions and passengers, all going to the help of the defenders of Warrenpoint.

5 The pace was slow and tedious for the first four miles, until we reached the waterworks, when Tommy Hearty shouted back to follow him, as he pulled out to pass the vehicles in front, and at the same time discharged two revolver shots in the air, and whether it was the sound of these shots or the excitement of the fast pace at which we were then travelling, I never since or before felt so thrilled, and Tommy Hearty became a hero in my eyes. We proceeded towards the Flagstaff, where our passengers alighted and after giving instructions to me to take care of the horses Tommy Hearty lead this contingent down the hill towards Narrow Water. I was very disappointed at having to remain behind but as I was only 12 or 13 years of age at the time, Warrenpoint on that occasion in Hearty's opinion would be no place for a boy so young.

START OF SINN FEIN - PADDY HUGHES.

6. Shortly after this episode Sinn Fein was established in Dundalk by Paddy Hughes, and supported amongst others by the same Tommy Hearty. The Gaelic League which had been established for some time, and confined itself to the language movement only, co-operated to some extent with the pioneers of Sinn Fein by concentrating in those early days on the support of Irish Industries, and Boycotting everything British. There was no rivalry nor jealousy between these two societies

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and many people belonged to both. Sinn Fein at first did not attract many members, but after some time, between lectures and Ceilidhe and production of plays such as "Lord Edward Fitzgerald" or "Robert Emmet" it attracted many boys and girls but the optimism, perseverance and sincerity of the Leader Paddy Hughes, was always a living force. The Gaelic League at this time produced several plays in Irish and formed a small body of what was known as "Glee" Singers, who were always at the disposal of rural districts for concerts and their selection of songs, recitations and Irish Dances helped to rekindle the spark of Nationality which was at this time rapidly dying out.

7 My two friends already mentioned made a further impression on me when they both stood up in the Market Square of Dundalk with a little band of 10 or 12, carrying an Irish Flag to protest against the Proclamation read on the accession of King George V. to the throne in 1910: This proclamation was read with all the pomp and ceremony with which the British were noted, and the garrison then stationed in Dundalk including the cavalry made a very imposing display. Still these few men had the moral courage to stand up in protest.

8 Louth at this time was the scene of party politics and had been represented in the British House of Commons by the late T.M. Healy, who had represented the constituency of Louth for upwards of 20 years, but the members of Sinn Fein already organised for a number of years but not boasting very many members took up an attitude of non-participation in the two elections of 1910, on the second of which saw the defeat of T.M. Healy, who immediately brought forward a petition and unseated his successful rival Mr. R.J. Hazleton, and several Voters in Louth were disfranchised for corrupt practices and

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or influence used by them in favour of Hazleton during the election campaign. This seat was subsequently filled with the nomination of Augustine Roche, who only lived until 1915.

9 START OF THE VOLUNTEERS IN DUNDALK.

At the inception of the Volunteers in 1913 the same two men already referred to again took a leading part. Their presence on the committee influenced many of their admirers into the Ranks. Subsequently this committee was supplemented by nominees of John Redmond, then Leader of the Irish Parliamentary party. This move of having these supporters of Redmond on the local committee did not please my two friends who had no confidence in them, but for the sake of peace and unity they agreed to work with them. Great efforts were made to collect funds for the purpose of providing arms and ammunition and I was personally appointed as a collector of the North Ward in Dundalk and whatever little difficulty we had in getting subscriptions on the first week of our collection, this disappeared immediately after the shooting in Bachelor's Walk, Dublin, on the occasion of the Howth Gun Running, 26th July, 1914, when the British Regiment the Sherwood Forresters shot down women and children in the streets of Dublin. This shooting caused widespread consternation and denunciation, and Irish people afterwards were more Irish than they had been for the previous 30 years.

10 SPLIT IN THE DUNDALK VOLUNTEERS.

This new spirit was short lived for the first great war broke out on the 4th August and the Royal Field Artillery, a British Regiment then garrisoned in the Military Barracks, Dundalk, received orders to proceed to France. I am not aware who was instrumental in organising a general send

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off with good wishes from the misguided townspeople who turned out en masse supported by 75% of the volunteers including the Bugle corps. When this became known as it did immediately to the Irish Ireland members of the controlling committee they demanded explanations as to who issued orders for this short-sighted display of a want of nationality. My friend Paddy Hughes was very fierce in his denunciation and on one night at the weekly meeting demanded of the existing committee whether they were pro Irish or pro British, and they were definitely pro British. A split took place in the committee which spread to the parade grounds where over a thousand were on parade. These were eventually marched into the skating rink and addressed by some of the pro British members of the committee who definitely stated they would have no Healyite or Sinn Fein element in the corps and asked the parade if they were prepared to follow a new committee, which was to be elected to replace the Sinn Fein members who were to be expelled. This naturally caused a split in the Dundalk corps. This was on the 8th August, 1914. All Irish Ireland members left never to go back. The National Volunteers stayed in existence for some months afterwards, and when Redmond's speech at Wooden Bridge caused a further split and they eventually died out, but not before they disclosed a blackguardly element who attacked the Dundalk Town Hall on the occasion on which Paddy Hughes was initiating the Irish Volunteers.

EFFORTS TO REORGANISE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

" This meeting which was arranged by Paddy Hughes by asking those who as he would say himself "were of his way of thinking" to come to the meeting for this specific purpose, and it was only attended by thirteen. News had gone round the town that such a meeting was in progress and the rougher elements of the National volunteers were mobilised and they

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rushed the Town Hall while the meeting was in progress with the result that Paddy Hughes and his comrades were forced to barricade the doors, and were confined there until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. Some of them escaped out through the windows into the Exchange Yard, to get to their homes. This small number of thirteen was the root of the little corps that left Dundalk on the memorable Easter Sunday morning 1916. The recruiting for this corps was very careful and very tedious. As an example I personally accompanied Paddy Hughes walking a distance of approximately 6 miles to interview two young men, who he heard were of the right calibre.

12. Dundalk was favoured with the Oireachtas in 1915 and was attended by delegates of the Gaelic League from all of Ireland, and this was the occasion on which the annual election of officers was to take place, and the younger element of the Gaelic League many of whom had then become officers of the Irish Volunteers of which Eoin MacNeill was the G.O.C., felt it would be more fitting if he was made President, instead of Doctor Douglas Hyde, who held the position for considerable time, and whose help for the Irish language could not be questioned, but young Ireland was moving and Pearse, McDonagh and Ashe and many of those associated with them in the Volunteers proposed Eoin MacNeill, who was duly elected, and although this election did some harm to the Gaelic League, as many of the older members felt that it was an act of ingratitude to depose Douglas Hyde, it did a vast amount of good, as it brought into the Gaelic League many young men who were up till then apathetic.

13. We were honoured with a visit in November, 1915, from Sean McDermott, afterwards one of the signatories to the proclamation who gave an inspiring lecture on the Manchester

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martyrs, and told his audience that these men set an example of bravery to their fellow countrymen, who should be prepared to make similar sacrifice if called on to do so. After this lecture many more recruits were admitted into the little corps, which was steadily growing, and by the end of 1915 had on its rolls approximately 70 members who were being drilled in the John Boyle O'Reilly Hall, twice weekly by John Finnegan, now deceased.

14 About this time we had our first route march, round by the Red Barns following which many applications were received for membership. The success of the lecture given by Sean MacDermott decided Paddy Hughes and his committee to go a step further and invite Mr. P.H. Pearse to give a lecture in the more imposing Town Hall, which could accommodate approximately a thousand people. After many disappointments in our efforts to book the Town Hall at Paddy Hughes' suggestion, Philip McQuillan's application was successful and the Hall was booked for an address and lecture by P.H. Pearse on, strange to say, Easter Sunday night, 1916.

15 Our application for the use of the Town Hall for this purpose to the Town Clerk, Matt Comerford, afterwards to be honoured by the British Government by making him a member of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.), was refused, for what he termed "sedition". An application to the Urban Council was defeated on our further application, but on a special meeting called by requisition the local volunteers succeeded in getting a majority to support the application.

PREPARATION FOR EASTER WEEK.

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The Dundalk Volunteers took over the John Boyle O'Reilly Hall in Clanbrassil Street for training and Drill purposes early in 1916, and from early in March intensive training was taking place there. Paddy Hughes was most active and he made frequent periodical visits to Dublin. It was about this time that he informed me that something serious was about to take place soon and that more intensive training was about to commence. He also informed me that a military instructor was coming to Dundalk to give the volunteers final intensified training. This man duly arrived - his name ~~of~~ Daniel O'Hernigan. The evening that

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O'Hannigan arrived in town I was introduced to him by Paddy Hughes in my business premises at the Square, Dundalk. Portion of these premises being then vacant at the time, I offered both Hughes and O'Hannagan accommodation for any meetings, conferences or planning they required outside the Boyle O'Reilly Hall which at this time was under strict watch by the R.I.C. I was in 1916 an ordinary member of the Volunteers holding no rank and was not then a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. My business premises were, however, used for all important meetings and conferences of the leaders and as a close friend of Paddy Hughes I was trusted and got to know many things about the preparation and plans for the Local activities in 1916, of which other ordinary Volunteers were not aware. It would be no exaggeration to describe my premises in 1916 as the local G.H.Q.

17 All during Holy Week, 1916, the Boyle O'Reilly Hall was a hive of industry as far as training and other preparations were concerned. Drills were held at different times each night to allow relays of volunteers facilities for rifle drill and instructions in Musketry. A short time before Holy Week a Volunteer accidentally discharged his revolver at a drilling practice which wounded another volunteer - Joe Duffy - in the hand. This accident was hushed up and I have never heard it mentioned since. This was the only accident at any of the drillings held in the Boyle O'Reilly Hall.

18 At one of the impromptu meetings held in my premises I was asked my opinion on the availability of transport for Easter Sunday. I expressed the opinion that the majority of the Hackney Car Drivers in Dundalk were poor men with poor horses and cars which would be useless for long journeys or fast travelling. I did promise to make

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57 available all the hackney vehicles belonging to our family business together with the services of my brothers (Joe and John) and myself. Our transport equipment consisted of a large Peugeot ^{LANDAULET.} ~~Landulet~~ 28 h.p. motor car capable of carrying 8 persons, a 2-horse Brake or Wagonett to carry 16 passengers. At this conference all the other hackney drivers were eliminated except Thomas Hearty an old Fenian who had full knowledge of what was about to happen and although an old man at the time was as keen on going out in the Rising as any of the young men. In addition to Hearty there were 2 brothers, James and Christopher Murtagh who if not actual members of the volunteers were so enthusiastic supporters that Paddy Hughes counted on their services together with a pony and trap his own property. This was the total transport available to the Dundalk volunteers for Easter Week 1916.

19 On Holy Thursday and on Good Friday the usual Holy Week devotions were customary in all Dundalk Churches and it was particularly noticeable how many volunteers took part in all the religious exercises. The confessions on Holy Saturday were attended by all. This aspect of our Corps preparation brought to my mind the words of the old song "That righteous men should make our land a Nation once again".

EASTER WEEK 1916.

20 It was customary for the R.I.C. to follow all parades of the Dundalk volunteers during the Winter of 1915 and the early months of 1916. It was no surprise on Easter Sunday morning to see 2 local Sergeants Wymmes and Connolly ready with their cycles at the Boyle O'Reilly Hall waiting to accompany the Easter Sunday parade. With the exception of

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our motor car all the other transport was lined up on the street opposite the Boyle O'Reilly Hall. The transport (1 Brake, 3 side cars and a pony and trap) would only accommodate a fraction of the 90 odd men marching out of Dundalk. The transport was used on the relay system and thus gave periodical rests to the marching men.

21 I got instructions that my motor car was not required until 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday. It was to be at Distillery Lane at that hour to accommodate 7 volunteers under Sean McEntee who had orders to raid 2 houses where 50 National Volunteer Rifles were concealed. The hour of 7 p.m. was fixed as the time that general action should take place all over the country in the original plans for Easter Week, and the capture of the rifles in Dundalk was to coincide.

22. The MacNeill countermanding orders arrived in Dundalk about 2 p.m. on Easter Sunday. The countermanding orders were responsible for the calling off of the raid on the 2 houses for the National Volunteer Rifles. On Easter Monday, Mat Commerford, Town Clerk, who was Secretary of the National Volunteers handed over those rifles to the Military Authorities in Dundalk for their use. I have previously mentioned this man in connection with the Urban Council's opposition to our application for the use of the Town Hall for Padraig Pearse's lecture. Mr. Commerford, for his treachery to Ireland, was honoured by the British Government with the title O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) shortly after Easter Week.

23. After the Dundalk Corps moved off on Sunday morning I had time to put our business affairs in some kind of order. Our business consisted of funeral undertaking, hackney work and

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2 licensed premises. My two brothers - Joe and John - and myself were mobilised. My father was available and although an active man had left the management of the whole business to me. We had at that time a most competent assistant named John Brannagan who was a member of the Volunteers. Brannagan had an accident to his hand a few days before Easter Sunday and on this account was not mobilised. On my specific instructions he refrained from turning out on Easter Sunday. He was conversant with every phase of our business and I put him in charge. He expressed his capability to carry on with the help of my brother Frank, then very young, and my sister Annie. Annie was a member of the Cumann na mBan and before Easter Week was engaged in providing first aid outfits to the volunteers but on Easter Sunday she was not mobilised. She also was very young, but an essential and useful help in the situation caused by the absence of her three brothers.

24. When I had the planning with Brannagan for the carrying on of our business completed and had the Peugeot car oiled, greased and filled with petrol, there was ample time to relax, before the zero hour of 7 p.m. My brother John and I were together and waiting when Eugene Hughes came to me with the countermanding orders from MacNeill calling off all our previous orders for Easter Sunday. He handed MacNeill's message to me as I was the only responsible volunteer available. I had read MacNeill's message in the Sunday Independent earlier in the day. I was trying to believe that the message in the Independent was a piece of bluff to throw the British Authorities off what was really going to happen. Doubts entered my mind. Thoughts of previous attempts at

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SM Insurrections, '98, '48 and '67 crossed my mind and was this last attempt to be another abject failure? ~~Were~~ four leaders now to let us down? However, this was no time for such thoughts. MacNeill's despatch had to be authenticated. This can be done by approaching two well-known Gaelic League enthusiasts whose integrity was the highest and who were both acquainted with MacNeill's signature:- The late Miss Angela Mathews, vice President of the Dundalk Gaelic League, and also a Cumann na mBan leader and the Rev. Peadar McArdle, S.M., St. Mary's College, Dundalk. Both confirmed MacNeill's signature as genuine and I had now no doubt of its authenticity. The question of getting the dispatch to the Dundalk Corps before any action should take place made every moment important and to ensure absolute security in the despatch's delivery my brother John took the Peugeot car and Sean McEntee took another car by a different road and both messengers arrived with the Corps about the same time.

15 At 2 a.m. on Monday morning the Peugeot car returned from Slane. My brother John was driving, my brother Joe and about 15 others were packed like sardines into the car. When the car arrived John told me that on the receipt of Owen MacNeill's countermanding orders, D.O'Hannigan and Paddy Hughes on the road near Collon, held a "Council of War" and it was decided to send a messenger to Dublin to find out if the orders issued by MacNeill were authentic and when the messenger was dispatched my brother John was told to remain with the Corps and await the return of the messenger back from Dublin. At midnight O'Hannigan came to John and told him that the car and any others who desired to go home in it should proceed to Dundalk as it appeared then that all the plans could be considered as called off. After the cars arrived in Dundalk and I heard the explanations as to its return we all went to

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bed around 3 a.m. on Monday morning.

26. On Monday the town was very quiet. There was no activity of any kind. The men who returned in the car went to their various jobs on Monday morning. About 6 or 7 p.m. on Monday I heard that a man was shot at Lurgangreen near Dundalk. I was told the man's name was Andy McGuinness. This man was deaf and had I was told ignored an order to halt when the volunteers were attempting to stop him. The first authentic information I received on Monday evening of the events at Lurgangreen came when the 2 horse-brake, which accompanied the Dundalk Corps returned to town. A James Corcoran who drove the Brake told me that he had accompanied the Corps from the time they left town on Sunday morning, to Ardee and Slane and from Slane via Dunleer and Castlebellingham to Lurgangreen on Monday evening. The Brake was used during the long march to rest relays of men from the fatigue of the long march. About 16 men could be accommodated on the Brake at a time. I was told that when the Corps were at Lurgangreen on Monday evening about 6 p.m. a messenger (Sean McEntee) overtook them and handed a despatch to O'Hannigan and Paddy Hughes. The Corps was then halted and all traffic on the road held up. The driver of the Brake was ordered to turn his horses in the direction of Castlebellingham and to continue travelling in that direction. The Corps with the Brake in attendance proceeded in Castlebellingham direction until a sufficient number of motor cars had been commandeered from Racegoers returning from Fairyhouse, to accommodate all the men comprising the Corps. Then the driver of the Brake was ordered to again turn his horses in Dundalk direction. It was explained to him that the horses had already covered a lot of ground and that they were very fatigued and could only travel at a slow pace and

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that the motor cars were fast and capable of long journeys. He was ordered to drive into Dundalk and to pick up all the people along the road from whom cars had been commandeered and take them into town. The Brake arrived in Dundalk about 7.30 p.m. on Monday evening with a full load of passengers.

27 . On Tuesday the military and R.I.C. came to our premises in Bridge Street to seize our Peugeot car. When they arrived we had the car dismantled by the removal of the carburettor. They ordered my brother John to leave the car at the Military Barracks. He repeatedly refused to do so. The military then commandeered one of our horses and his harness and used the horse to take the car to the Barracks.

28 A body named the Home Defence Corps were mobilized on Monday night, were armed by the Military and sent out to guard all bridges and all roads leading into town.

29 Amongst the rumours current in town on Monday evening was that Constable McGee, R.I.C. was shot on the street in Castlebellingham.

30 On Monday evening the Town Clerk (Mat Comerford) who was Secretary of the National Volunteers, handed over to the military 50 rifles belonging to the Nationalist Volunteers. Those rifles were to have been seized on Sunday evening by the Irish volunteers. The arrival of Owen MacNeill's orders prevented the seizure of the rifles.

31 The position on Tuesday evening was that the town was completely isolated; all roads held by Crown Forces. A crop of rumours were floating around town. No definite news as to where the Dundalk volunteers had gone or what had happened to them. We knew that Tom Hearty with his hackney

car had accompanied the Corps on their march from Castlebellingham on Monday evening.

32. The men who came home on Sunday night from Slane were about 40% of the full Corps who marched out of town on Sunday morning. On Tuesday those men were in a state of tension and suspense. They were anxious to do something and the plan to do anything was not clear as no orders of any description came to Dundalk after MacNeill's countermanding orders of Easter Sunday. Some enthusiasts conceived the idea of getting to Dublin by Boat and Gerry Norton, Point Road, Dundalk, who had a motor boat volunteered to convey us to Howth near Dublin. We had gone so far with those plans that we had collected petrol and paraffin oil and all in suitable cans for the expedition and transported to the Navey Bank where Norton's boat was tied up. Art O'Neill, John Garvey, Frank Nocy and others were actually awaiting embarkation. Sandwiches were prepared and ready. I don't know who it was who initiated this plan but its organisation was well advanced when our Senior Officer in Dundalk, Seamus Toal, heard about it on Tuesday. He came to our place at Bridge Street and not only did he countermand the plans but he gave a severe laceration to all who agreed to take part in it. Names if required. He described it as hair-brained and impossible to accomplish.

33. From Thursday to Saturday feelings of hopelessness prevailed. We were awaiting word that never came and received no news whatever of the men who marched for Dublin on Easter Monday evening.

34. The shooting of Constable McGee in Castlebellingham on Monday evening had an unfortunate and damaging effect on public opinion in the town of Dundalk and district as he was

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evidently very popular with all who knew him. Castlebellingham was in those days very pro British owing to its connections with Sir Henry Bellingham, whose two sons, Captains Rodger and Edward Bellingham were serving with the British Army in France. Those two young men's connection with the army and their father's deserved popularity in North Louth influenced many young men from Castlebellingham district to join the British forces. It was the relations of those men who constituted the jury that sat on the inquest of Constable McGee and brought in a verdict of murder against Paddy Hughes and Paddy McHugh, and for whose arrest warrants were immediately issued. Their names, photographs and descriptions appeared in the Hue and Cry and a "price was placed on their heads" which I am happy to relate was never collected.

35 This inquest and the verdict in the McGee shooting took place during Easter Week and, in Dundalk, had the effect of turning sympathisers away from us and gave the people opposed to us the opportunity to cast ridicule on the early fruits of our efforts at Insurrection. We were referred to as pro Germans and as men who were trying to stab John E. Redmond in the back, and by our actions blasted all hopes of the implementation of the Home Rule Bill then held to be in a state of abeyance.

36 Thomas Hearty and his hackney car arrived in Dundalk in the early hours of Thursday of Easter Week. Shortly after he arrived in Town I had an interview with him. Hearty told me he had got with the Dundalk Corps to Dunboyne in Co. Meath and that he was forced there by D. O'Hannigan after a night's rest to turn back owing to his horse's distress and his own advanced years. He informed me that at Dunboyne a goodly portion of the Dundalk Corps were together and

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proceeding in Dublin City direction. He seemed in great form and spoke enthusiastically of our armed men marching across the country carrying our National flag. He stressed his pride in the fact that the flag of the Republic flew so many days even though he feared it was fated to go down against much superior forces.

37 The news of the Surrender in Dublin came to us on Saturday and was received in Dundalk with mixed feelings; feelings of joy and jubilation by our opponents and by feelings of sorrow and disappointment by us.

ARRESTS IN DUNDALK, MAY, 1916.

38 On the 4th May, 1916, a round up took place of many of the Dundalk participants in the Rising. The R.I.C. and military made simultaneous raids on a large number of houses in the Town and arrested about 30 volunteers in the early hours of the morning. Amongst the numbers arrested were some of the men returning that morning into town on their return journey from Tyrrellstown House. Over 30 of the Dundalk Corps had reached Tyrrellstown House near Dublin City about mid Easter Week and after the surrender took place they dumped their guns in a friendly house near Dunboyne and in the early days of May were making their way home to Dundalk in twos and threes weary and distressed.

39. On the evening of the 4th May all the men arrested in Dundalk were removed in handcuffs by train to Dublin and were put into Richmond Barracks. On that same day some of the leaders were taken from Richmond for execution in Kilmainham. When in Richmond several of the Dundalk men were taken out and courtmartialled including Sean McEntee, James Sally, Denis Leahy, Frank Martin, John Quinn. At their courtmartial all those were sentenced to death. Sentences

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later commuted to Penal Servitude. All the other Dundalk men in Richmond were, with one exception, deported to England for internment.

40 The chief evidence against the Dundalk men sentenced to death was the evidence of 2 R.I.C. Sergeants, Wymes and Connolly. In fairness to Sergeant Connolly I must say that had he been prepared to corroborate Sergeant Wymes' evidence fully, many more of the Dundalk men would have been courtmartialled.

41 The effect of the execution of the 1916 leaders in Dublin caused a shocked feeling of regret amongst the people of Dundalk generally, including many politically opposed to the volunteers. The letter written by Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick to General Maxwell, refusing the General's request to the Bishop to remove certain priests in his Diocese and published in the public press was received by the people of Dundalk with feelings of encouragement and hope and pride and almost overnight a complete change of attitude took place amongst a lot of the public who were indifferent about the fate of the volunteers then in British Jails and prison camps. This was the first incident to show the British that a prominent Irish personage had the courage to stand up to General Maxwell, and Dr. O'Dwyer was hailed as the champion of the weak and as a new leader of Irish opinion and became a universal favourite.

42. Immediately after the Dr. O'Dwyer incident, badges and buttons with inscriptions and photographs of the 1916 leaders especially those who paid the extreme penalty were distributed and worn in great numbers especially by the younger generation, then growing into manhood and womanhood. Sinn Fein songs were being whistled and sung in the streets and

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several new Ballads were composed and published and became universally popular. Not only sympathy for, but an admiration for the men who participated in the Rising swept the country from end to end. Pearse's prophesy came true! A new spirit was born! When the prisoners' dependents' fund Committees were established in many districts funds came rolling in. About this time National Clubs were established in all districts to carry on, under a camouflaged name, the work of Sinn Fein.

43 It was during this period of reawaking from the feeling of dispondency caused by the military failure of the Rising in Dublin and other districts that some of the volunteers interned in England were released. Some of the Dundalk men were released in August 1916 and others came home afterwards up to Xmas 1916 when the general release of interned men took place.

44 Before I leave the period of 1916 in Dundalk district I wish to give one instance of high personal courage and sacrifice for Ireland which took place in Easter Week. A man named Paddy Donnelly, a Tailor by trade, was married to a Dundalk girl named Clarke. Donnelly was reared at Glenmore, Cooley, and was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. On Good Friday night 1916, in the kitchen of Donnelly's house at Riverstown a meeting was held at which a few volunteers including Michael Ferguson, now deceased, attended. Mrs. Donnelly was in bed in a room off the kitchen where the meeting took place as she was expecting her first baby and she overheard Ferguson telling Donnelly that he should not take part in the mobilisation on Easter Sunday on account of Mrs. Donnelly's condition at the time. Mrs. Donnelly on hearing this came up to the kitchen and said "Ferguson you are not going to prevent my husband taking his part in whatever is

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taking place, as I don't wish that any person should be justified in saying to my child your father was a coward". Donnelly took part in the mobilisation on Sunday and marched away with the Dundalk Corps. Early on Monday Mrs. Donnelly became suddenly ill after the birth of twins and her sister Miss Lucy Clarke who heard of her condition and was also aware, through her connection with the Cumann na mBan, of the home coming of the Dundalk Corps from Slane on Monday evening left town to meet them and to inform Donnelly of his wife's serious condition. She arrived at Lurgangreen about the same time as Sean McEntee overtook the Dundalk Corps with the message from Dublin to again resume their march towards that city. She informed Donnelly of the birth of the babies and of his wife's serious condition. Poor Donnelly was shocked and distressed by the bad news he received, but he informed his sister-in-law that he considered the call of duty to Ireland could not be ignored by him and he again marched away for Dublin with the Corps, and did not return to Dundalk until after the Surrender. He actually got into the fighting zone in Dublin before the Surrender. He was arrested and sent to Frongoch Camp. Mrs. Donnelly and her babies got, for the time being, alright. About early December, 1916, Donnelly got a letter informing him of the serious illness of one of his babies who subsequently died. He applied for parole from the Camp and was granted it. When the parole was due to expire Donnelly returned to Frongoch and arrived there only to find that the general release was on and returned home again. Mrs. Donnelly subsequently died. She had never completely recovered from the effects of the birth of her babies.

45 Donnelly took part in the "Black and Tan War", and for a time was interned in Ballykinlar. He contracted T.B. and

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eventually emigrated to Australia in the hope that the climatic conditions there would improve his health. He unfortunately took up employment in Australia as a tailor and his health completely broke down. He wrote home to friends explaining his condition and regretting his visit to Australia. We made a collection in Dundalk and raised sufficient funds to pay his passage home. We sent the money on to him and when it arrived he was dying. The cash was used for his funeral expenses. Donnelly's case is typical of many other great fighters for Irish Freedom who gave of their best in resources and self sacrifices to be forced later on by economic pressure and the disillusionments of the Civil War years to leave the Ireland they fought for and loved, never to see their country again.

AFTERMATH OF THE RELEASE OF 1916 PRISONERS.

46 After the Frongoch prisoners were released at Xmas 1916, the efforts at a reorganisation of the volunteers were intensified. The successful results of the Sinn Fein candidates in the Bye-Elections of Roscommon, Longford and Kilkenny gave a great fillip to the Republican movement generally and to the Sinn Fein organisation in particular. The return of the sentenced leaders in June, 1917, after the General Amnesty was the occasion of great jubilations and when the leaders returned home their arrival in Dublin and in their various home districts gave rise to enthusiastic demonstrations of welcome and they were looked on as National Heroes^F everywhere.

47. The Clare Bye-Election where E. De Valera captured the seat had an astounding effect. This Election which took place at the time the volunteers were making strenuous efforts to reorganise provided an opportunity for the volunteers to

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parade openly in military formation, with many of their officers wearing uniform for the first time since Easter Week 1916. After this election, public Meetings were held principally under the auspices of Sinn Fein, at which volunteer officers made inflammatory speeches and as a result the British made arrests in many widespread districts all over the country. Many of the leaders released at the General Amnesty were again arrested and all were confined in Mountjoy Prison.

48 After these arrests the prisoners put forward demands to the Prison Authorities in Mountjoy for proper Prisoner of War Treatment and on their demands being turned down all went on hungerstrike to compel the granting of their demands. During the hungerstrike many of the prisoners were made to endure the ordeal of forceable feeding which resulted in the tragic death of Thomas Ashe. This event caused consternation and widespread indignation all over the country and Ashe's funeral to the Republican Plot in Glesnevin Cemetery was attended by tens of thousands of volunteers from all over the country. The magnitude of the Ashe funeral and the fine military bearing of the volunteers marching in the funeral procession showed the world that the British Government's efforts to quench the flame of Republicanism in the Easter Week holocaust was a failure. The organisation of the volunteers for this funeral showed that the young men of Ireland could be organised on a more gigantic scale than was thought possible or attempted before the Rising in 1916.

49. The inquest on Thomas Ashe which occupied several days disclosed the extremes that British officialdom in Ireland could go in their efforts to break up the Republican spirit of the Irish people. Mr. Timothy Healy, K.C., who represented the next of kin at the inquest asked for a verdict

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of Wilful Murder against the prison officials in Mountjoy including the Prison Doctor and the Prison's Board personnel. Ashe's death caused such a panic to the British administration in Ireland that the Prison Authorities in Mountjoy granted the prisoners their demands to get them all off the hungerstrike.

50 In the Spring of 1917, I joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood and soon afterwards got to know Michael Collins and other members of the Leinster Executive of that organisation. I am mentioning this matter here as my first meeting with Collins was soon to lead to an association with him which put me into a position of great local prominence. I will deal with my associations with the I.R.B. organisation in detail later on.

51. Immediately after the granting of Prisoner of War Treatment by the British Authorities to the volunteers in Mountjoy Prison they were all transferred to Dundalk prison. When Volunteer Headquarters in Dublin heard of their transfer Michael Collins contacted me by 'phone and told me to get in touch with Austin Stack immediately. He gave me a Dublin Phone Number where I could contact a Mr. Knightly, a newspaper reporter then I think working on the Staff of the Irish Independent and to report to Mr. Knightly the prison conditions of the men sent from Mountjoy to Dundalk.

52. Following Collins's message I went to Dundalk Prison and I learned that a new hungerstrike was in progress, as the concessions granted the Volunteers in Mountjoy had been withdrawn in Dundalk. On my arrival in Dundalk prison I got an interview with Austin Stack, Terence McSweeney and Paddy Brennan of Co. Clare, who confirmed that a hungerstrike had begun. They handed me a copy of their demands to the Prison

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Governor - McHugh. Before I left the prison I contacted the Governor. He seemed in a state of panic and he complained that he was selected to handle a situation in Dundalk Prison which might again lead to a tragic death.

53. On my return from the Prison I 'phoned Mr. Knightly and gave him the exact position in the Prison and I read out to him the demands made to the Governor on behalf of the prisoners. I also sent Mr. Collins a despatch on the 12 noon train conveying the same information as I had given to Mr. Knightly on the 'phone. A large caption "Sinn Fein Prisoners again on Hungerstrike in Dundalk Jail" - in that evening's Herald and in the next day's Irish Independent concerning the Dundalk prisoners, caused consternation throughout the country. Later on that day I called on Dr. Gill a medical practitioner in Dundalk who was also acting as Prison Doctor. I informed him that if any deaths amongst the prisoners in Dundalk Prison took place the people of Dundalk would hold him responsible.

54 I again visited the prison on the following morning and there met Sir Thomas McArdle, D.L., J.P., a visiting Justice to the prison - who expressed his anxiety to meet some of the prisoners' leaders. Sir Thomas was a local brewer and I was one of his customers and intimately acquainted with him. He seemed agitated over the position in the prison and he feared that another hungerstrike with the Ashe tragedy so fresh in peoples minds would have unfortunate effects on public opinion. He enquired which of the prisoners he should interview in an effort to effect a settlement and put an end to the strike and I suggested Austin Stack and he asked me to accompany him at his interview with Stack which I did.

55 We got the interview in the Prison Library. Sir Thomas appealed with all his eloquence to Stack to have the

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hungerstrike called off and that he would travel to Dublin immediately and interview The Honourable James McMahon. Stack was adamant saying "We have already lost one life in our fight in defence of our principles and rights and every volunteer in the Prison is prepared to follow Thomas Ashe's example if forced to do so". "Stack" Sir Thomas replied when he saw his eloquence had failed "you are not human" and tapping the marble mantelpiece of the fireplace of the Room with his fingers added "you are made of stuff like that". Sir Thomas went to Dublin that evening to see The Honorable James McMahon as he promised.

56 In two days' time the first of the prisoners in Dundalk was released under the "Cat and Mouse Act". His name was Seamus O'Neill then a professor in Rockwell College, and now a Superintendent in the Civic Guards. He was released as the Doctor considered his heart was in a bad condition! The day following O'Neill's release there were about 10 more of the prisoners released and in about 4 days following the first release there were about 28 men released. Amongst them Oscar Traynor, Frank Henderson, Eamon O'Dwyer, Terence McSweeney, 3 Brennan brothers from Co. Clare, J.J. O'Sullivan, Philip MacMahon, J.J. Walsh, etc. On the next day all the prisoners remaining were released.

57 All the prisoners, up to the last batch, on being released were entertained by the Dundalk Volunteers, kept overnight and conveyed to the railway station with torchlight processions and bands. The last batch released left for Dublin the same evening in order to attend the Robert Emmet commemoration in Dublin the following day.

58 About 3 days after the last of the hungerstrikers were released from Dundalk prison a new batch of prisoners

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arrived in Dundalk from Cork under the leadership of a man named Maurice Crowe. On their arrival in Dundalk Prison I visited them and gave them a copy of Stack's demands. They all were on hungerstrike. Their releases took place within 6 days in sequence similar to Stack's men.

59 I have already mentioned the Peugeot car commandeered by the British military during Easter Week 1916, and retained at the Military Barracks. In spite of repeated applications to the Officer Commanding the military and D.I. Norris of the R.I.C. for the return to us, the car was retained in the Barracks. We were compelled to purchase a Model T. Ford car and we deliberately registered the car under the name J. McGill to cause the authorities confusion as to its ownership. The Registration No. of the car was IY.10. We were not then recognised as motor owners by the competent Military Authority under D.O.R.A. We ran the car in defiance of all authority. Our petrol supplies were safeguarded by the fact that when the Peugeot was commandeered we had an allowance of 28 gallons of petrol per month for it and we continued after its seizure to draw its allowance of petrol which we concealed. When we purchased the new car we applied to Somerset House, London, for petrol supplies for it and from Somerset House we received a petrol Ration Book for 50 gallons per month. A new regulation under D.O.R.A. then made it necessary to have this permit endorsed by the local competent military authority officer - District Inspector Norris, R.I.C. - When I applied for this endorsement to D.I. Norris he refused to endorse the permit but he told me he would do so if I should inform him of the location of the arms and ammunition "dumped" by the Dundalk men after Easter Week. He also stated that the authorities were aware that arms were still coming into the country and

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and that it was the duty of all law-abiding subjects like myself to convey such information to him. He told me that if I gave him all the information I had about the location of arms I would get all the petrol I required and other things in addition. I told him that we intended to run the car in defiance of authority if our permit was rendered useless and that we would get petrol supplies without his permission. I used very strong language in connection with his efforts to make an informer of me.

60 Shortly after this interview with D.I. Norris the military garrison in Dundalk Barracks were being changed to another post and during the short interval before the new garrison moved in, I seized the opportunity of going into the Military Barracks with one of my brothers - John, and a horse and removing the Peugeot car and towing it home without permission from any person. The successful removal of the car from the Military Barracks and their failure to locate it was the start of a vendetta against us by the police authorities. A prosecution under D.O.R.A. Regulations was brought against my Father-John McGuill Senior-and my brother John McGuill Junior, at the Newry Petty Sessions. Our Solicitor under our instructions demanded proof of ownership and the case against my father and brother was dismissed. The initial J. on the Registration of the car could mean any of four members of our family - my father, myself, my brothers John and Joe. A second prosecution was brought against my brother John and myself at Dundalk Petty Sessions. In the charges I was named as owner of the car and John was prosecuted as the driver of the car. The same defence was pleaded - no proof of ownership - but we were convicted and fined nominal amounts in several charges. We informed the Court that we refused to pay the fines as it appeared to us that the whole
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proceedings were pure victimisation. We were subsequently arrested for the unpaid fines and removed in handcuffs to Mountjoy Prison. In prison we adopted a passive resistance policy and we both went on hungerstrike and were released under the "Cat and Mouse Act" on Christmas Eve, 1917. Our attitude in connection with our efforts to use a motor car in defiance of official authority was favourably commented on by the Sinn Fein Executive. Arthur Griffith remarked that if the Irish people as a whole could be raised up to our standard the country could be freed in 5 years by the passive resistance policy.

61 The death of Dr. Charles O'Neill, Nationalist M.P. for South Armagh in early January, 1918, caused a Bye-Election there, which took place on 1st February, 1918. As soon as the vacancy occurred in South Armagh the Sinn Fein organisation made preparation to contest the Seat. One of the first moves made was the organisation of the volunteers in many districts throughout the Constituency.

62. Early in the election campaign I accompanied Michael Brennan of Clare and George Plunkett, both wearing Irish Volunteer uniforms, on an organisation drive of the volunteers. We started companies in almost every Polling District in the area. Those young men without any previous military training undertook the task of organising and training as volunteers with such enthusiasm that their military bearing and discipline during the Election created a favourable impression on all volunteer officers who visited the area from Dublin, Clare and other parts of Ireland where the volunteers were then fairly well reorganised. Companies were organised in Crossmaglen, Dorsey, Mullaghbawn, Dromantee

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Kileavey, Camlough, etc. All the leading figures in the Sinn Fein organisation and the volunteers from various parts of the country moved into South Armagh. The late Harry Boland was in charge of Newtownhamilton area. Michael Collins was in charge of an isolated area named Ballymoyer which was by no means a Republican stronghold. When I met him there he seemed particularly disheartened especially when he made comparisons between where he was placed and his native Roscarbery in Co. Cork.

63. Coming on to the end of the campaign the local Volunteers went through an acid test. The Hibernian organisation assisted by their Unionist supporters adopted violent tactics to break up and disrupt Sinn Fein Meetings. At a meeting in Crossmaglen on the Sunday before the Election, rival meetings were called for the same time. Sinn Fein decided to have the last word and the Hibernians were of the same mind. The meeting developed into a man to man fight. the discipline and elan of the volunteers prevailed against an unorganised mob and they cleared the large square of the town and held their meeting.

64 Owing to the difficulty of getting Committee Rooms in South Armagh, Dundalk was selected as the centre of all the Election machinery. Dr. Patrick McCartan was the Sinn Fein candidate and a Mr. Patrick Donnelly a Solicitor from Newry was the Hibernian candidate. I was appointed Director of Transport for the Election and as restrictions were then on the use of petrol and not being recognised as a motor owner by the Authorities I had great difficulty in organising our transport. Many motor owners who were sympathetic did not wish to be openly identified by lending me cars so I had to resort to the subterfuge of mock sales by pretending to buy the
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cars, and giving each owner who required it a cheque for an amount equal to the value of the car. This I believed would protect the owner of the car if questioned by the Authorities. To prevent individual identification of cars, on each car working for Sinn Fein I put plates bearing my own Registration Number IY.10. immediately the car was handed over to me.

65 On the 29th January, 1918, my brother John and myself were arrested as we had not reported as was required by the police under the "Cat and Mouse Act". The real reason for our arrests was an attempt to disrupt the transport organisation for the Election. We were taken to Dundalk Prison where we immediately went on hungerstrike. Mr. De Valera who was in Dundalk was very much annoyed by our arrest at such a critical stage as he feared a flop in the transport organisation for the Election. He instructed Austin Stack to call at the prison and ask us for our permission to allow the fines to be paid and so effect our release and have us available for polling day. This we emphatically refused to allow. We pointed out to Stack that our doing so would have a very detrimental effect on local opinion. Stack recognised our view point as sound and appreciated our attitude. He then questioned me on the risk to us of having our Registration Number IY.10 on all the cars working at the Election and quoted Mr. De Valera as having said it was unfair for any individual to carry such responsibility which was proper for the organisation to bear. Stack asked me for my permission to have the Registration No. I.R. 1916 substituted for Registration No. IY.10 on all the cars including our own to which I agreed. All drivers of cars working for Sinn Fein at the Election were supplied with Drivers' Licences issued by the Sinn Fein organisation and signed E. De Valera. The Registration No. I.R.1916 appeared

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on all our cars in the South Armagh Election and also at two subsequent Bye-Elections - East Tyrone and East Cavan.

66 We were released from Dundalk Prison on the morning of the declaration of the Poll, 2nd February, 1918, after 4 days' hungerstrike, and we immediately went to Newry where the count of votes was taking place, to get the result which was disappointing as our candidate was defeated. The Election however, served good National purposes as it introduced into the Constituency which was a Hibernian stronghold, a vigorous Sinn Fein organisation which from the election onwards increased in numbers and was able in 1920 to obtain a majority in the Local Government elections over both the Hibernian and Unionist parties. The Volunteer organisation which sprung out of the Election increased in numbers. As I said before the volunteers who joined up for the election were subjected to an acid test and came through it splendidly. Those men and the later recruits who joined up after the Election although small in numbers when compared to areas in the South, gave a splendid account of themselves in the Black and Tan war.

67 As the cars used in the Election up to the eve of the poll carried the Registration No. IY.10 the police of the different districts had instructions to take note of the time and place where the Registration No. IY.10 appeared. After the Election I got a sheaf of Summonses, 45 in all for offences committed in different parts of the constituency. An examination of the Summonses disclosed that the same Registration Number appeared at the same approximate time in places 20 miles apart. After service of the Summonses I brought them to Dublin and showed them at the Sinn Fein Headquarters for their advice as to the action I should take up in Court in defending same. I was interviewed at Headquarters by Austin Stack who
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informed me that he believed that my case was a good opportunity for effective propaganda. He started to outline for me a plan of procedure, then he halted and said that the case was so important that he would keep the Summonses and have Counsel's opinion before he would give me any advice. Eventually he returned to me the Summonses. His advice was that I should conduct my own defence and proceeded to give explicit instructions.

68 He segregated the Summonses into 3 headings, "A", "B" and "C". "A" heading contained 19 Summonses in which there were technical errors and were "bad on the face" and that on pointing this out to the Bench I was entitled to an immediate dismissal. Heading "B" contained 11 Summonses where I was charged with using a (one) motor car contrary to the Defence of the Realm Act which according to Stack was also wrong in Law as D.O.R.A. did not prohibit the use of a car it only prohibited the use of petrol outside specified regulations. The 15 remaining Summonses were to be fought out individually by questioning Witnesses as to whether they had tested the fluid in the petrol tank and in no case was this done. Another point he advised I should bring out in my cross-examination was how a car of a particular Registration Number could be in Crossmaglen at 10.45 and be in Poyntz Pass at 10.50 a.m. 20 miles apart, on the same day. Another point he wished me to bring out was the fact that I was arrested early on the morning of the 29th January and all those offences were claimed to have been committed on the 29th, 30th and 31st January, whilst I was a prisoner and I was to cross-examine the policemen who were present at my arrest as to what opportunity was given to me on the morning of my arrest to lock my car or cars. He further instructed me that for the purpose of causing inconvenience and expense to the police authorities I was to

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demand from the D.I. in Court as soon as the cases were called the Fiat giving authority to the D.I. to prosecute, which in 99 cases out of 100 was not produced in Court and its absence would cause the D.I. embarrassment and he would probably ask for an hour's adjournment to produce the Document. Such an adjournment I was strongly to object to and ask for a decision on the merits. I was to point out that I was a busy man who had to attend the Court at great inconvenience and if there was any adjournment it should be for a week. This was what really happened; the Fiat was not in Court and I got a week's adjournment.

69. When the cases eventually came up for hearing and the fiat produced I was to make a statement which I had memorised and was as follows:-

70 "Whilst not recognising the right of this Court to try me on this or any other charges I put the onus on the Bench to sift those summonses to their very foundation for I will prove with my right to cross-examine witnesses which I demand, that those were cases brought against me in a spirit of vindictiveness, are clear cases of victimisation for the failure of the District Inspector to bribe me to become a common informer and a traitor to the organisation of the Irish volunteers to which I have the honour to belong. I challenge the District Inspector in this open Court to deny that he offered me unlimited petrol for information concerning the volunteers".

71 I carried out all Stack's instructions and succeeded in getting "dismiss" in all the cases against me. The Court was crowded and the police authorities were held up to ridicule and I was hailed as a budding Tim Healy. Those cases ended the civil proceedings for petrol offences against us.

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The Authorities took a more drastic step later on as we continued to run cars in defiance of the Regulations until they were finally commandeered by the Military Authorities.

72 After the South Armagh election the British Authorities got active in rounding up men who did not report under the "Cat and Mouse Act". The first of those prisoners to arrive in Dundalk Jail was the same Seamus O'Neill who was the first hungerstriker released from Dundalk Prison. The next to arrive was Mr. Brennan and he was accompanied by Sean Tracy, afterwards one of the most distinguished officers in the I.R.A., who had received a sentence of 12 months for some military offence. On their arrival in the prison those men went on hungerstrike for the original demands. I interviewed the hungerstrikers in the prison daily even when they were removed to the prison hospital. I also interviewed Dr. Gill who informed me that any recommendation to release made by him must first be sent on to the Prison's Board and he personally was of opinion that the Authorities would not again release men taking part in hungerstriking.

73 This information was conveyed by me to G.H.Q. The local volunteers who, not wishing to see those men die on hungerstrike contemplated organising an escape for them from the Prison. Plans for the escape or rescue from the Prison was submitted by me in Dublin to G.H.Q. on the 10th day of the strike. Mr. Collins informed me that negotiations between H.Q. and ^{THE HON.} ~~Sir~~ James McMahon, Under Secretary for Ireland, were going on about the three men on hungerstrike in Dundalk and that a decision would be arrived at within 24 hours. In the meantime H.Q. were opposed to any action that might lead to bloodshed. I was told that Arthur Griffith was of the opinion that any activity of the volunteers which might cause blood shed could precipitate conscription for Ireland which was then a

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critical problem. I came home from Dublin disappointed. On the 12th day of the hungerstrike it was called off by G.H.Q. I am unaware of the terms offered the hungerstrikers. Prisoners arrested subsequently and confined in Dundalk Prison including those re-arrested under the "Cat and Mouse Act" were not obliged to go on hungerstrike.

74 A new batch of prisoners arrived in Dundalk shortly after the end of the hungerstrike by O'Neill, Brennan and Tracy including many of those previously released under the "Cat and Mouse Act" in the previous October and Dermot Lynch Sinn Fein Food Controller who had been sentenced to 12 months for intercepting a consignment of live pigs at the North Wall, Dublin, en route for England. He had the pigs slaughtered and distributed to pork butchers whose supplies were much curtailed owing to the unrestricted export of pigs to England, this export taking place whilst our home population were in want. A repetition of 1847 could have occurred but for this very timely action. In a few weeks time the Jail filled up to its full capacity and about 90 Republican prisoners were in Dundalk. This great increase in the population of the prison was due to the fact that when drilling of volunteers in obedience of a G.H.Q. order had taken place in many parts of the country which led to the arrest of the officers drilling the men. Those officers when charged were sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from 6 months up to 2 years.

75 When the Dundalk Volunteers held their parade in obedience to the order for open drilling, Frank Thornton was in charge of the parade wearing uniform. A few days after the parade, Thornton and about 10 others of the Dundalk Volunteer officers were arrested in Dundalk. Thornton was tried by courtmartial in Belfast for this offence and received a

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sentence of 12 months imprisonment. At his courtmartial Thornton made a fine speech in which he stated that he was recognising no law in this country except the Law of God and the Law of the Republic established in 1916. The other Dundalk volunteers arrested with Thornton were removed to Mountjoy and were subsequently brought back to Dundalk and tried before a Crimes Court presided over by two Resident Magistrates. Amongst the men tried was the late P.J. Berrill who made a most inflammatory speech from the Dock. All the men were sentenced to a short term of imprisonment. After the trial when the Prisoners were being removed to the station en route to Mountjoy there was a spontaneous mobilisation of the volunteers (and in addition non-volunteers who formed up with the volunteers) all paraded as an escort to the prisoners. Jemie Toal - then O.C. of the Dundalk Volunteers - who up to then was unknown to the British Authorities as he was a quiet unassuming man with no ambition for the limelight, was obliged to take charge as were all other Company Officers to assist him in this huge march or procession to the railway station. This demonstration led to the arrest of a further batch of volunteers which included Jemie Toal and every Company Officer and Section Commander in Dundalk area.

76 When the names of the men arrested in Dundalk appeared in the Dublin papers the following day, I received a 'phone message from Dublin requesting me to go there immediately. I travelled to Dublin and met Michael Collins and was instructed by him to take charge of the volunteers in Dundalk Area, pro tempore, and that I was to fill all officer vacancies caused by arrests and to keep filling all future vacancies that might occur as further arrests were likely. Collins told me that I should not make myself conspicuous in order to avoid arrest myself. Those arrests and Collins'

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instructions to me propelled me from the position of an ordinary volunteer into the position of being for the time being O.C. of the Dundalk Area. Thus at a time of crisis I had to assume a responsibility which I did not seek and for which I had little training or experience.

77 The danger of conscription for Ireland caused a big influx of recruits into the Volunteers. Our numbers in Dundalk rose so rapidly that I had to divide the volunteers in the town into three Companies. Those new units were as follows:-

| | | |
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| A. Company - | Capt. Joseph McGuill | 1916 Service. |
| B. " " | M. O'Callaghan | " " |
| C. " " | Philip McQuillan | " " |

The following Companies were organised in North Louth:

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|-------------|---------------------|
| Ravensdale | Capt. Thomas Callan |
| Cooley | " Michael Ferguson |
| Omeath | " Paddy Oaks |
| Brig-a-Crin | " Mat. Lynch. |
| Kilcurry | " Paddy Hughes |
| Shellagh | " Thomas Luckey |
| Blackrock | " Joe Cotter |
| Knockbridge | " Joe McKenna |
| Killanny | " Frank Byrne |
| Inniskeen | " Owen Meegan |
| Louth | " P. Murtagh |

(Killanny and Inniskeen are on the borders of Co. Monaghan).

78 Those Dundalk and North Louth Companies with the others I have already mentioned as being organised in South Armagh were recognised at G.H.Q. as a Brigade Area.

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79 About March, 1918, conscription for Ireland appeared imminent and headquarters instructed me to procure for them certain information, principally the location and strength of all enemy outposts and blockhouses on the railway line from Drogheda to Goraghwood Station along the Great Northern Railway line and also the strength of the garrisons in all military and police barracks in my area. I procured the major part of the required information from Company Officers but as the railway line did not always run through organised Company Areas, I got my brother Joe specially on this part of the work and he supplied me with full particulars. When making his report to me he signed it "Capt. J. McGuill". After I received the various reports on this matter I condensed the material into my report to G.H.Q. and filed the original reports for future reference by the Brigade.

80 One of the original demands made by Stack at the time of the Ashe tragedy was the right of daily visits for prisoners of war. To ensure that each of the prisoners in Dundalk Prison who required a visit should get one I made out a list of all prisoners and handed the list to the Dundalk Cumann na mBan. The Cumann na mBan officers in Dundalk at this time were :

Angela Mathews (Decd.)

Maura McHugh (Now Mrs. O'Hagan).

Maura Mandeville (Now Mrs. Nicholls).

The Cumann na mBan were to organise systematic visits for all prisoners who were not getting visits from their own friends or relatives. I reserved to myself visits to Austin Stack and Dermot Lynch. Mrs. Terence McSweeney had come to reside in Dundalk for the purpose of visiting her husband the later martyred Lord Mayor of Cork. She stayed in Dundalk with Miss Kieran now Mrs. Peadar Halpin. Mrs. Seamus O'Neill, M.A.

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wife of Seamus O'Neill of Rockwell College, already referred to, also took up residence in Dundalk to be near her husband. I obtained a permit from the Governor of Dundalk Prison which would admit me and two others at any time we desired a visit to a prisoner (this permit is still in existence and will be made available for reproduction purposes).

81 My visits to prisoners were generally made in the afternoons. Mrs. McSweeney called on me one forenoon and told me that I should go to the prison immediately and get a visit to Dermot Lynch. This I did and during the visit Lynch told me he had been served with a deportation order that morning. The British had found out that he was an American subject and had decided to deport him to U.S.A. He handed me two letters for immediate delivery in Dublin. One of the letters was addressed to G.H.Q. and the other to a young lady. I can't now remember her name. She was Lynch's Fiancée.

82. I proceeded to Dublin and went to the Mansion House where a meeting was in progress convened for the purpose of getting all political parties in the country united in a determination to resist conscription by all the resources of a united people. After the meeting I met Arthur Griffith and Eamonn De Valera and they told me to take the G.H.Q. letter to 6 Harcourt Street, which I did. I then took the other letter to the young lady's address. This letter contained the information of Lynch's early deportation and expressed his strong desire to be married to her before the deportation order became effective. The letter pointed out that the marriage ceremony would give her the status of an American Citizen and as the wife of a deportee she could claim the right to travel to America with her husband. The letter also instructed her to

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see her clergy and make all arrangements for the marriage to take place in the prison. The letter also stressed the urgency of the matter as he expected to be deported within a few days.

83 The day I called on the young lady was a Friday. The young lady, a lady friend and a Priest arrived in Dundalk on the following Monday evening and reported to me on arrival. The priest, whose name I have forgotten, had to call on the local administrator Rev. James McKeown (decd.) later Canon McKeown, for faculties to perform the marriage in Dundalk parish. The late Cardinal Logue was Parish Priest of Dundalk and Fr. McKeown was his administrator.

84 In order that no suspicion of what was to take place would be aroused it was arranged that the two ladies and the priest would arrive at the prison at 10 a.m. the appointed hour for visits on Tuesday morning. I accompanied them to ensure that no other visits would take place at the same time. They were to ask for visits to 3 prisoners one of course being Dermot Lynch and the other two were I think Oscar Traynor and Frank Henderson. The procedure of visits allowed three prisoners to see friends at the same time in the same visiting room which contained a low barrier a Warder being of course present.

85 As soon as the visit commenced the young lady who acted as bridesmaid and one of the prisoners started an animated conversation with the Warder and kept his attention much occupied. The priest, the bride and the groom and his fellow prisoner who acted as best man formed another group, and the priest was able to have the Marriage Service read and the ceremony completed without attracting the Warder's attention. The Warder's name was Furey and at the completion

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of the ceremony he realised what had taken place and his feelings then I am sure were appropriate to the name he bore.

86 After the ceremony was completed the members of the wedding party who were free to do so, left the prison and retired to the Queen's Hotel to partake of a Wedding Breakfast as the groom could not be present I acted as Proxy. We were joined by some local Cumann na mBan and volunteer friends and we partook of a wedding breakfast with the usual celebrations. About 3 p.m. that evening I was informed by one of our Scouts, I had watching the prison, that two plain clothes detectives had gone into the prison and we assumed that those men were the escort which were to take Lynch to Dublin for his deportation. In anticipation of his removal on the 4 p.m. train we proceeded to the station and were only a short time there when Dermot Lynch and his escort arrived. The bride and bridegroom met and embraced surrounded by the "Wedding Party" who tendered congratulations to the happy couple. Some person with foresight had confetti and scattered it over the escort with the wedding party. When the train arrived the bridegroom, Bride, Priest and bridegroom's escort took their seats in the same compartment. I then telephoned Dublin informing H.Q. that the "happy" couple had departed for Dublin.

87 I heard later that when the train arrived in Dublin a number of Lynch's friends were at the station and when Lynch's conveyance, the Black Maria, started to convey him to the Bridewell they engaged cabs and followed the Black Maria through the streets of the city in unique procession. The bride insisted on her right to travel in the Black Maria with her husband to the Bridewell.

88 I also heard that Mrs: Lynch accompanied her husband to Liverpool with the intention of travelling with him to the

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States but she was not allowed to travel as she had no Marriage Certificate to show that she was Mrs. Lynch.

89. It was believed in early March, 1918, that the enforcement of conscription on Ireland was liable to happen at any moment which would precipitate a major national crisis. G.H.Q. anxious to show to the British the widespread strength of the volunteer organisation, ordered every Company in the country to parade on an appointed hour on St. Patrick's Day, and each Company Captain was ordered after the parade to send in a report to his local Headquarters stating how many men paraded. There was a magnificent response in every area to this order and strange to say no arrests for open drilling followed except in one instance - Mr. Frank Aiken, now T.D. for Louth - was arrested for parading his Company in Camlough and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. Whilst Mr. Aiken was in prison a revision session for voters lists was held and Mr. Aiken's name was objected to on the grounds that he was under 21 years of age. The objection was upheld.

90 After St. Patrick's Day parades had passed over Headquarters anxious to secure the freedom of the large number of important prisoners then in Dundalk Prison sent two officers from General Headquarters to Dundalk on separate occasions to get a plan of Dundalk prison and the immediate vicinity. Those officers were Liam Tobin and Sean McGarry. Frank Thornton was serving his term of imprisonment in Dundalk at this time and he prepared plans of the inside of the prison and prison grounds and had them sent out. The officers who came down from G.H.Q. surveyed the outside of the prison and its surroundings. As it was G.H.Q.'s wishes that I should get a number of revolvers into the prisoners I was ordered to attempt doing so. I had an interview with Austin Stack in the prison and found that he was aware of G.H.Q.'s.

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plans for the escape. I got the necessary armament into the prison as follows. Sir Thomas McArdle, D.L., J.P., (previously mentioned) called on me at my business premises on one of his usual business visits and enquired how his "friend" Stack was getting along. I told him that I was visiting Stack that evening as I had got a commission from him to purchase a pair of boots. Sir Thomas thought for a moment and then said "If you can arrange to call at the prison around 4 p.m. I will go with you on the visit as Stack made a favourable impression on me during our recent negotiations". I told Sir Thomas that I would be very pleased with his company on the visit and that I was sure Stack also would appreciate his visit. I then got the idea that Sir Thomas's presence at the visit would be helpful in getting in the guns. At 4 p.m. I turned up at the prison and there met Sir Thomas. I had with me a new cardboard bootbox in which I had three revolvers well packed in paper. We went to the prison door and rang the bell. When a Warder was opening the door I found that one of my boot laces had become undone and I handed the boot box to Sir Thomas so that I could tie the lace. The door opened and Sir Thomas walked in with the box in his hand. I followed and the Warder took us to the Library as was usual when Sir Thomas visited the prison, and when Stack came in the Warder left the Library. I took the parcel then from Sir Thomas and handed Stack his "boots" saying "I hope your boots will fit". Those revolvers were subsequently returned to us when the danger of conscription had passed, by J.J. Madigan sending them out in a parcel of laundry which he handed to a Miss Woods, Wynn's Terrace, Dundalk, now deceased, during one of her visits to him at the prison. Shortly after this all the Dundalk prisoners were removed to Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast.

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EAST TYRONE BYE-ELECTION.

91 The death of Major William Redmond, M.P. serving with the British Forces in France, fighting for "Small Nations" created a vacancy in East Tyrone. Sinn Fein headquarters did not wish to fight the election as it was felt by the leaders in Dublin that contesting the seat would be a hopeless proposition and that a defeat during the acute conscription crisis would not be good politics. Major Redmond when he succeeded in winning the seat was fortunate in fighting it under most favourable circumstances where the nationalist population came out and supported him with a 99% vote.

92. Belfast did not agree with headquarters in Dublin and asked permission to fight the election and stated that they did not require either money or help during the campaign. In a moment of weakness it was agreed that the seat should be contested. Sean Mulroy was selected as the Sinn Fein standard bearer and his opponent was a solicitor named Harbanson from Dungannon, who fought as a Hibernian nominee. The polling day was April 4th.

93 Just one week before the election date reports from the constituency were so unfavourable and the local organisation so hopeless that Sinn Fein at this late hour sent into the area all the help they possibly could to try and retrieve the situation. I got a despatch from Michael Collins on the Sunday prior to the election date, which was held on the following Friday, to proceed to Dungannon and take charge of the transport. I arrived in Dungannon on Monday evening, Easter Monday, I think, and I also think Michael Collins was arrested in Dublin on that day. When I arrived in Dungannon I found the transport arrangements for the election in so bad a

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way that all I could be promised was a supply of ponies and traps. The Sinn Fein Party had to wait in Dungannon for the only waggonette available for speaking from when addressing a meeting, until the opposition party had finished with it. With some locals I visited a few Sinn Fein sympathisers who owned cars but were timid of lending them to us. As for South Armagh I arranged with those people to change the Registration Numbers on all cars lent to us. One priest I visited told me he was attending a conference in Dungannon on Election day and that his car would be parked outside the church where the conference was being held and that we could take it. I also visited other priests who had cars and were also attending the conference and I made a suggestion to them to follow the example of the first priest I visited. In every case the priests agreed that we should take their cars. In all there were about three Nationalists I visited who refused to give us their cars.

94 Peadar Clancy was working in the North end of the constituency before I arrived in Dungannon. I got in touch with him and we made an arrangement that each of us should commandeer Nationalists Hibernian cars, on the eve of polling day, and that he should send his commandeered cars to me and that I should send my commandeered cars to him. As soon as I received the cars from Clancy I had the Registration Number I.R. 1916 affixed to each car and on the cars I sent to him, I also affixed the same Registration Numbers. All cars working for us on election day including the cars we got from the priests carried the Registration Numbers I.R. 1916. In addition to the cars we were able to procure in the constituency, I wrote to my brother John and he arrived on polling day with three Dundalk cars, one of which belonged to Bernard O'Rourke, Inniskeen, who gave it voluntarily. In
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O'Rourke's car came Mr. Peter Hughes ex-T.D., Dundalk, who gave what support he could in getting our voters out to the poll.

95 The Scarcity of petrol prevailed in this as in other recent elections. We raided the petrol depot in Dungannon and took all the petrol there which was a small quantity. John D. Nugent, General Secretary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, sent three cars from Dublin to work for our opponents on the evening before polling day. A cattle dealer named Francis O'Neill, a Tyrone man near Dungannon asked one of the drivers of the cars for a lift into town. He got a seat in the car and was told by the driver that the cars were sent down to help the Hibernians in the election and asked Mr. O'Neill if he knew where the Hibernian headquarters was situated. He said he did and directed the cars to our tallyrooms. When those cars arrived I was informed that three of our opponents' cars were parked outside our door. I went out to the drivers and welcomed them and enquired if they had any extra petrol with them. They told me they had 30 gallons for their three cars. I then told the drivers to have the extra petrol carried into our rooms for safety which they did. Shortly afterwards a messenger came and informed the drivers of their mistake and they came to me demanding their petrol. I told them to go whilst the going was good or I might be tempted to take the cars. They immediately cleared off. The election was won by Harbanson.

96 This defeat in East Tyrone was rather serious from the Sinn Fein point of view coming so soon after the defeat in South Armagh. It was felt by some that the British would interpret those defeats as a weakening of the hold that Sinn Fein had on Irish public opinion. Michael Collins' arres

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on the Monday previous to polling day in connection with a speech he made in I think Derry on St. Patrick's Day created a serious situation to both Sinn Fein and Volunteer Headquarters. In the Volunteers he held a key position and his arrest at a time when the application of the Conscription Act to Ireland was looked on as likely at any moment, appeared so serious at headquarters that it was decided when his trial took place in Derry that he should give bail to be of good behaviour. At his trial Collins was sentenced to give substantial bail to be of good behaviour for 12 months or in default to serve a short term of imprisonment. Collins was prevailed on to give bail. This was the only instance after 1916 and up to this time when the giving of bail was ordered by G.H.Q. At the time there was a standing order against volunteers giving bail in British Courts and it was stated that the departure from the order in Collins' case was not to be taken as a precedent. The British Authorities did not then appreciate the importance of the man they so lightly let out of their hands!

PLANS FOR OBTAINING ARMS.

97 About May, 1918, there was an absolute scarcity of arms in Dundalk area. I got an idea that I might be able to procure arms in Liverpool and went over there. Through my associations in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, I made contact with Mr. Neil Kerr a native of Armagh City area. I told Kerr my business, and he told me he would do what he could to help me. I arranged with him depots in Liverpool where stuff could be in safety until it could be lifted by my agents. The S.S. Dundalk travelled between Dundalk and Liverpool three times per week. My agents working on this boat were Vincent Morgan, then Assistant Steward and afterwards a fireman;

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James McGuinness, Fireman and Roger Morgan, a Cattleman, to each of those men I gave £10. 0. 0. of my own money to purchase anything in the arms category that they could lay their hands on. The names of the men who occupied the depot's where arms could be stored were George McAleavey, Edge Hill, - Leahy, Scotland Road and Paddy McKeown, Scotland Road. Peter Murphy, Newsagent, Scotland Road, was the address where the agents travelling by boat could pick up despatches. At my discussion with Neil Kerr he informed me that he was in possession of very valuable information about the location of Ulster Volunteer Rifles in Co. Down and that several hundred rifles were stored in the place. He told me that he had communicated the information to G.H.Q. in Dublin who had instructed him to send a man over to Co. Down to make enquiries if the arms were still in Ballyedmond Castle and if so to get a plan of the Castle and its surroundings and if it was possible for the man to get into the Castle to make a plan of the inside apartments showing where the rifles were stored. Kerr told me that he had not then picked a man for getting the information for G.H.Q. but when he sent the man over he would instruct him to report to me as soon as he arrived in Ireland and that he would carry a letter of introduction to me. On my return to Ireland I travelled via Dublin and called at G.H.Q. and informed them of what Kerr proposed to do when sending his man over to Ballyedmond. As a result of my visit to G.H.Q. they instructed Neil Kerr to send his man to G.H.Q. before he reported to me, as headquarters wished to give the man final instructions.

98 An I.R.B. man named Frank Hearty duly arrived in Dundalk and reported to me with Kerr's introduction. He then proceeded to Killowen, Co. Down and contacted Peter
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Murney who lived there. With Murney's help Hearty was able to gain admission to the Castle where he found a female relative of his working as a maid. He was able to make a detailed plan of the castle, the basement where the rifles were and the surrounding area.

99. Frank Hearty returned to Dublin with the plans which he handed in at G.H.Q. where Hearty's rough plans were properly drafted to scale and were subsequently handed over to P.J. Berrell after his release from Dundalk Prison about a month after Hearty's visit to Ballyedmond. The raid on the Castle did not immediately take place. I will deal with the raid in its proper sequence.

MILITARY TRAINING BY AUSTRALIAN EX-SERVICEMAN.

100 During the Tyrone bye-election Peadar Clancy put me in touch with an Australian soldier who had deserted from the Army. This man was a military genius of whom I heard men well competent to gauge, state that he could impart more understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the science of military training than any other man with whom they later came in contact. I had this man sent around to each Company. He gave officers and men an intensive course of open order work in the fields at night, during the month of April, 1918. He also gave lectures on musketry, tactics of attack and defence, control of men in extended formation. He was only a short time with us but he did very useful work and he at least gave all who attended his drills and lectures an idea of how much we had to learn of the science of military training, and a keen desire to get as proficient as possible in this very technical subject.

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RELEASE OF DUNDALK OFFICER PRISONERS AND RE-ARREST
OF OFFICERS - GERMAN PLOT.

101 About the first week of May, 1918, the Dundalk officers who had been sentenced to short terms of imprisonment were released. Shortly after their release a meeting was held at which I put the facts of what had happened during their imprisonment before them and I expressed my wish to relinquish my command over Dundalk Battalion Area, which was in my opinion of a temporary or acting nature. James Toal, the former O.C. would not agree that I should retire. He stated that he was contemplating forming a Brigade Staff for Louth and South Armagh of which he wished me to be Adjutant. At this meeting I handed over a report of the working of the area during the officers' imprisonment. My report on British Blockhouses, Military and Police Barracks, documents and files of correspondence. After this meeting P.J. Berrell went to G.H.Q. Dublin, with a report of the working of the area from the time the Dundalk officers were arrested. On his return from Dublin he had a note book containing the plans of Ballyedmond Castle with an intimation from G.H.Q. that the raid should be carried out as soon as possible after Berrell's return. Another meeting was called to consider the plans and to organise an immediate attempt on the Castle. This meeting at which I was present, took place on the evening of the 16th May and lasted almost to midnight. Berrell who lived in Williamson's Place off Park Street, had a habit of calling every evening to Peter Hughes who was a personal friend of his and a brother of the 1916 Leader, Paddy Hughes. Berrell was not five minutes in Hughes's house when the house was surrounded by British armed forces and both Hughes and Berrell arrested in connection with the alleged German Plot. This

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British round-up of suspects was general, taking place all over the country at the same time. Berrell when arrested had all the documents handed over by me at the meeting on his person when the raid on Hughes's house took place and they were all captured as he had not an opportunity of safeguarding them when the raid commenced.

102 One of our Scouts overtook me on my way to my father's house after the meeting and he informed me of the arrest of Hughes and Berrell. Instead of going to my father's house I went to my sister's. I waited at my sister's house until I saw the military going towards my father's house to arrest me. Some time after I saw the military returning from the raid on my father's house, I went home. That was the last night I slept in my father's house; for at least a month I slept in Peter Hearty's, Linnenhall Street. I moved about during the day and no attempt was made to arrest me.

103. There were about 100 prominent men arrested during this general round-up, including E. De Valera. Many of the arrested men were elected as T.Ds. in the General Election of December, 1918. All were deported to English Prisons.

MY ARREST AND TRIAL.

104 As I have stated when Berrell was arrested he had all the documents and papers which I handed over at the meeting that evening including the one concerning the Blockhouses, Military and Police Barracks. This document was signed "Captain J. McGuill" (already referred to) and the plans for the raid on Ballyedmond Castle.

105 I was arrested on the 17th June, 1918 at my father's house and I got a rough handling from the military. I was not allowed facilities to dress myself. I was taken under heavy military escort to Belfast in my shirt and trousers. I was taken
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to Victoria Military Barracks and after three days there I was transferred, again under heavy military escort, to Crumlin Road Prison. The card on the door of my cell in Crumlin Road read "Military Prisoner on Remand".

106 For the taking of the summary of evidence for my courtmartial I was removed to Victoria Barracks with an escort of three military tenders on or about the 30th June. As I was alighting from the tender on which I was escorted, at the guardroom I observed a well-dressed civilian of foreign appearance and wearing a beard, standing on the Barrack Square. I assumed that this man was a spy or an Intelligence Officer. I was at the guardroom for about 15 minutes when I was taken into another room and was greatly surprised to find that the man I saw on the Barrack Square was in the room waiting for me. He addressed me in a pronounced Oxford accent and stated that he was sent down to Belfast by General Headquarters to represent me at the taking of my summary of evidence. I suspected that he was a British Secret Service Agent and I demanded his name and his credentials. He told me he was Gavan Duffy, S.C., and that unfortunately he carried no credentials. As I did not know Gavan Duffy I was still suspicious and I told the man that as an officer of the Irish Volunteers I knew the attitude to take up at the summary of evidence and at my courtmartial. As an officer I would refuse to recognise the court and could not see where he could help me when my attitude towards my trial was such. He replied that he appreciated my point of view. He apologised for his want of credentials explaining that he had to start for Belfast in such a hurry after receiving his instructions from General Headquarters that he overlooked the importance of getting credentials. His explanation so fitted the circumstances of the time that I felt he was genuine.

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107 Mr. Duffy then explained to me the seriousness of the charges being made against me, and told me that he felt that I didn't fully realise the grave nature of the issues involved in the courtmartial as far as my personal safety was concerned and also as far as the interests of G.H.Q. was involved. He pointed out that G.H.Q. looked on my courtmartial as a test case in which the British government were attempting to prove the validity of their alleged German plot, and by so doing counteract the world and especially American sympathies aroused by the sacrifices of Easter Week, 1916.

108 I was charged with offences under two headings - (1) The major charge of being the author of a document of grave potential value to the enemy - Germany - containing the strength and location of British Military Posts. This document it was stated would be of great assistance to the German war effort and a serious danger to the British Government and their allies at a time when their war effort was in its most desperate phase. (2) I was charged with being in possession of a document which was likely to cause dis-affection amongst his Majesty's subjects. (This was a Fianna Eireann drill book found in my premises during one of the many raids carried out by Crown Forces).

109 The documentary evidence produced for my courtmartial to prove the charges against me were classified under headings: Exhibit "A" - Document explaining location and strength of various British Military and Police Barracks. Reports Signed Capt. J. McGuill. Exhibit "B" - A selection of my paid Bank cheques from both the Belfast Bank, Dundalk, and the Munster and Leinster Bank, Dundalk, containing my signature; and Exhibit "C" - The Fianna Eireann Drill Book.

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SM When Mr. Gavan Duffy and I had discussed the main

features of my defence he informed me that it was not absolutely essential for him to represent me at the taking of the summary of evidence, but that I must obey his instructions. He told me to question each witness who appeared to give evidence against me; that my questions could be simple and would be suggested when I heard each witnesses evidence. He stressed the importance that any questions I asked should be real questions, not assertions.

/// The taking of the summary of evidence occupied two days. The Courtmartial took place about seven days later.

//2. The police witnesses consisted of several R.I.C. men including two Sergeants whose evidence was to the effect that I was known locally as "Captain". Two military officers gave evidence to prove that in raids on my premises they found paid Bank cheques bearing the same signature as that on the document - Exhibit "A" - on which the major charge was based and that the document was found in the possession of Joseph Berrell when he was arrested in the German Plot Round-up. They also gave evidence in respect of various Volunteer activities with which I was connected.

//3 The two Bank Managers were called to prove that the signature on Exhibit "A" was made by the same hand as the signature on the paid Bank cheques.

//4 Some time before my arrest I opened an account in the Munster and Leinster Bank having already an account with the Belfast Bank. Paid cheques from both those Banks were on my premises during a raid and were taken possession of by the raiders. There was a striking similarity between my brother Joseph's signature and my own.

//5 Following Gavan Duffy's advice I questioned each of

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the military officers and was able to show up discrepancies in their evidence in matters of minor detail concerning accounts given of my previous military activities in the Volunteers such as numbers on parades in which I was in charge, dates and contradictions in their evidence re carrying of arms and wearing of uniform, etc.

116 Under cross-examination the two Bank Managers were not so definite that the signatures on Exhibit "A" were made by me. They would only go so far as to state that there was a striking resemblance in the signatures of both Exhibits "A" and "B".

117 The question of proving the signature on Exhibit "A" as mine was considered so important that two British officer handwriting experts were called to give evidence. I can't now recollect if they gave evidence at the taking of the Summary but they certainly gave evidence at the courtmartial.

118 Gavan Duffy represented me at the Courtmartial properly credentialled by G.H.Q. He had with him a copy of the summary of evidence taken previously with the probable addition of the handwriting experts. The handwriting experts evidence would leave little doubt that the signatures on both Exhibits "A" and "B" were made by the same hand. The court were about to terminate the business of the courtmartial and it looked certain that I would be found guilty when Gavan Duffy made a demand that the Documents in Exhibit "A" and "B" should be subjected to a scientific chemical test. After consultation the Court agreed and the Second Charge was proceeded with. No decision was given on either charges that day. I was taken back to Crumlin Road Prison.

119 Whilst awaiting the result of the Courtmartial which
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I understood would be promulgated in about four days' time, I was kept in a wing of the prison next to the wing occupied by Austin Stack and a large number of volunteers who were at that time engaged in breaking up their wing. I could communicate with them by shouting across the space of a small exercise ground separating both wings. When the specified time for getting the result of my courtmartial arrived, I informed Stack of the fact that I got no result and he advised me to start and break up my cell, which I proceeded to do by smashing the window with my stool. After this event I met the Governor during exercise in the yard and I told him I was going on hunger-strike if I did not get my courtmartial result, and he advised me to be in no hurry with it as in his opinion it would be unpleasant when I got it.

120 On the 22nd July about 5 p.m. I was taken from my cell to the Governor's Office where two high-ranking military officers were waiting for me. They had the file of my courtmartial papers and one of them proceeded to read the file through when I impetuously requested the officer to read the last page. He severely reprimanded me for my insolence and informed me that I had been acquitted in the major charge and found guilty in the minor charge, that I was sentenced to 90 days' imprisonment and that the sentence had not been confirmed by the Officer Commanding His Majesty's Forces in Ireland. I could not believe my ears and I asked him to tell me what it all meant in plain English. He told me that I was now clear in both charges, and that I was at liberty to go home. At this time, volunteer prisoners even after serving their sentences were being re-arrested outside the prison gates and deported to English Prisons where German Plot prisoners were being held and I naturally felt that a

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similar fate was in store for me as soon as I got outside the prison door. I went to my cell for my belongings and when I returned I was handed a railway warrant for the journey by train to Dundalk. At the time and since when I think over the matter of my release I feel the result was in the nature of a miracle. On the previous St. Patrick's Day, I and a few Volunteer officers and Cumann na mBan girls were discussing doing the pilgrimage to Lough Derg and we fixed that we should travel together on the Pilgrimage on the 23rd July. As stated I was released on the 22nd, stayed in Belfast that night took the early train for Dundalk next morning and after an hour's delay in Dundalk to clean up and change my clothing, I was able to join the party for Lough Derg.

121 On my return to Dundalk at the end of July, 1918, I found that there was some falling off in the strength of the Volunteer organisation and the enthusiasm of earlier in the year was waning. The Conscription menace had in July disappeared and many of the young men who had joined up in the Spring of that year dropped attendance at parades and became inactive. I was still in the position that I had no definite command as an officer. No further move was made by James Toal who commanded the Volunteers to form the proposed Brigade for all Co. Louth. The outbreak of the epidemic known as the Great Flu occurred about October, 1918, and amongst the earliest of the local victims was James Toal, R.I.P., whose death was a serious loss to the volunteer organisation. After Toal's death my obscure status in the volunteers was made definite by my appointment as Officer Commanding, Dundalk Battalion. I was also appointed to replace him as head centre to the I.R.B. for Co. Louth.

122. At the end of the Great War November, 1918, a

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General Election was in the offing in which Sinn Fein decided to contest all seats on the Republican principles as set out by the 1916 leaders. The candidate selected for Louth was J.J. O'Kelly (Scellig) who was opposed by Richard Hazelton representing Irish Parliamentary party interests. The Louth Election was closely fought and Scellig won the seat by the very slender majority of 288 votes. In other parts of the country some Sinn Fein Candidates were returned unopposed; many of the successful candidates being still prisoners in British and Irish Jails.

123. Sinn Fein gained an overwhelming victory in the election and following out their declared policy of absentation from attendance in the British Parliament, a meeting was called in the Mansion House, Dublin, in January, 1919, to form a Republican Government. The new Deputies were now known as T.Ds. and the old term applied to Irish Parliamentary Representatives, M.P., was dropped. All Irish Representatives were summoned to the first meeting of the Irish Republican Parliament including the few Redmondites elected and the Unionists, whose leader was then Sir Edward Carson. Only the Republican (Sinn Fein) Representatives attended.

124 I was present at the first meeting of Dáil Éireann which was presided over by Cathal Brugha. The opening ceremony of prayers was recited by the Rev. Michael O'Flanagan, one of the Vice Presidents of the Sinn Fein organisation. The Declaration of the Irish Republic in 1916 was next read in many languages. Our elected Representatives had by this endorsed the policy and ideals of the men of 1916, which had the overwhelming majority of the Irish votes in the election supporting them. The vote for the Republic cast by the Irish

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SM people has ~~now~~ ^{NEVER} since been recinded by them. Dáil Éireann then proceeded to appoint a Cabinet and select Ministers for the various Departments of State.

125 After the general election a number of well-wishers in Dundalk organised a Smoking Concert in town to provide funds to entertain Volunteers who were active in the Election. The function produced the sum of £25. 0. 0. I advised that this money would be better spent in providing arms and equipment for the Volunteers. I took the cash to Dublin and handed it to Tom Cullen, then Acting Q.M.G., to pay for rifles. I got one rifle immediately with the promise of more later on. We waited some months and when the promise given was not then fulfilled, I called again on Cullen. In the discussion with him I raised the question of the County Louth rifles which had been dumped in County Meath after Easter Week, 1916. Those rifles had been collected by the County Meath Volunteers some time after 1916 on the instructions of G.H.Q. and had been the subject of negotiation carried on by me with G.H.Q. for their transfer to us. In this second interview with Cullen I agreed that if we got the 1916 rifles handed over I would accept handgrenades for the balance of £25. 0. 0. in his hands. Those handgrenades were later conveyed by train to Dundalk by my wife. In order to avoid suspicion at the Railway Station in Dublin my wife was accompanied there by her sister - a nun, Sister St. Luce of the Bon Secours Order. She was met on her arrival in Dundalk by William Acheson a Dundalk Volunteer whose occupation was a Hotel Bus driver who met all incoming trains at the Railway station and carried the Baggage of all his hotel clients from the platform to his bus. My wife's "Baggage" was taken by him to his bus. Our *SM* Quartermaster, Thomas Mulholland, ^{LATER} killed in action, was waiting

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at the station with a van and he removed the "Baggage" from the hotel bus and had it conveyed to our dump. Some time after my visit to Cullen we got notification that the 1916 rifles could be handed over to us. I sent Sean Gormley with an escort to Co. Meath for the rifles which he succeeded in safely conveying to Dundalk.

126 When the German Plot prisoners were released from the various jails in which they were confined, a public reception was organised for all the Louth prisoners in Drogheda. A meeting of volunteer officers was called in Drogheda for the purpose of organising a Brigade for Co. Louth. This meeting took place immediately after the reception for the prisoners and the result was as follows:-

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| Commandant | Philip Monaghan |
| Vice Commandant | Laurence Walsh |
| Adjutant | James McGuill |
| Quartermaster | James E. Murphy (later T.D. for Louth). |

127 I held the position of Adjutant of the Louth Brigade up to 1920 when a further reorganisation took place and Louth was then divided into two Brigades - North and South. I was then appointed acting O/C. of North Louth. This appointment is still in existence and was signed by Michael Collins, Adjutant General, as far as I can remember. I can't definitely remember if the Brigade Staff was elected when I was appointed Acting O/C. Brigade. I had a serious cycling accident about that time which made me a casualty for a period. I think, however, that the following may have been appointed before I was laid up.

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| Adjutant | Sean Gormley |
| Quartermaster | Thomas Callan |

I don't remember if a Vice O/C. was appointed.

128 When I was incapacitated I appointed Sean Gormley to act as my deputy O/C. Brigade.

129 One of the first departmental activities of Dáil Éireann was the setting up of Republican Courts. I was not a prominent member of the Sinn Fein organisation. I was, however, anxious to get the Courts under way as soon as possible. As Senior Officer of the I.R.A. in North Louth I was asked to help in getting the Courts established. I, with others, was asked to go on a Committee set up to select Court Justices in all the various districts; Peter Hughes and I were delegated to call on selected persons in each area where Courts were being established. We got refusals in some cases but we eventually got men to act as Justices and the Courts were got going in all North Louth districts. I found that it was difficult to get men to act as Justices in Local Courts as the majority of eligible persons did not like to be put in the position of adjudicating in matters concerning their neighbours and in some cases their relations. John B. Hamill, Solicitor, Dundalk, gave great help in the setting up of the Courts.

130 When we had the Courts operating we called on all local Solicitors and suggested that they should have all their clients' cases tried in the Republican Courts, and the majority refused but eventually after the Courts started to operate and established a good reputation for fair and honest decisions, Solicitors' clients were asking their Solicitors to have their cases tried in our Courts. Eventually the local Solicitors came into the Republican Courts with their cases and the British Courts were practically boycotted. Republican Courts functioned in every parish and a higher Court - District Court - was established. In the District Court, P.J. Berrill was the first Registrar and it was due mainly to him that the

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Court functioned so efficiently. Berrill was both intelligent and hard working and gave all his energies to his work.

/31 The setting up of the Courts necessitated the Establishment of a Republican police force whose duties were attendance at the Courts, protection of the Courts, the enforcement of Court decrees and orders, collecting fines, etc. The police force was imbued with a high sense of duty and soon gained a great measure of respect. It was about this time that an intense boycott of the R.I.C. was ordered. The R.I.C. were the eyes and ears of the British Government. They were men of fine physique and were a well trained force. They felt their position keenly when their friends and acquaintances and in some cases their relations ceased to speak to them or render any of the little courtesies that makes life pleasant. No Republican would speak or shake hands with them. The reaction of some of the R.I.C. to this boycott was an inclination to indulge in all sorts of petty tyranny and in some cases actual prosecution of the people generally.

/32. In 1920 there had been no Municipal, Rural or County Council Elections for about 6 years and Sinn Fein in preparing for an early election decided to contest all seats; selected candidates and had all election machinery in order when the date for elections was fixed. The Municipal Elections took place in January, 1920. In Dundalk a majority of Sinn Fein candidates were returned on the Urban Council and Peter Hughes, ex-T.D. (brother of the 1916 leader) was elected Chairman. I was elected to this body. Many of the Municipal bodies elected in 1920 with Republican majorities immediately passed resolutions pledging allegiance to Dáil

Eireann. We did not do so immediately after we were elected on the advice of Peter Hughes. The outgoing Urban Council had been in negotiation with Lord Roden for the purchase of Dundalk Demesne and the British Local Government Board had promised to put up the money to purchase Lord Roden's interest in the property. If we had immediately "cut the painter" with the Local Government Board some commercial interests in town would have purchased the property and it would have been lost to the people of Dundalk. This property lies in the centre of the town and now has hundreds of houses erected all within a short distance of the market square. A few months after the elections the deal with Lord Roden was completed and the Dundalk Urban Council were in a position to follow their inclinations in the matter of recognising Dail Eireann and did so.

/ 33 A "round up" of active republicans took place in Dundalk in January 1920. The following were arrested:- Three MacGuills (my two brothers, John and Joe, and myself), William Acheson, P.J. Flynn, Seamus Laying and some others. We were removed to Crumlin Road prison, Belfast. Those arrests took place on the day prior to the unveiling of a war memorial at Castlebellingham at which the late Cardinal Logue officiated. At the ceremony Cardinal Logue denounced the British government for what he described as their short-sighted policy in arresting respectable young Dundalk men and he demanded our release or our trial forthwith. We were all released without trial within three weeks.

/ 34 The next local event of importance was in connection with the attack and capture by the I.R.A. of Ballytrain Barracks in Co. Monaghan. The Dundalk Battalion co-operated in this operation by blocking all the roads by which the military in Dundalk could travel to the relief of

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the R.I.C. in Ballytrain. A few days after the Ballytrain affair I was arrested and conveyed to Derry Jail. As soon as I arrived in the Jail I demanded the status and prison treatment originally demanded by Austin Stack in Dundalk Prison in 1917. I had a copy of Stack's demands on my person when arrested. Immediately I made the demands I went on hungerstrike until the demands were granted. The Governor of the prison was then on the eve of his retirement from the Prison Service and did not relish the position that a repetition of the Ashe tragedy would cause. He intended to live in Derry after his retirement. He got the Prison Doctor to issue a certificate on my condition and my demands were sanctioned by the Governor. I enjoyed all the privileges of prisoner of war treatment until the Governor resigned about two weeks after he granted me my demands. Shortly after the new Governor's arrival in the Prison several prisoners arrived from Co. Monaghan including Dan Hogan (afterwards Major General in the National Army). When Hogan arrived I interviewed him and explained the treatment I was receiving and I asked him to demand similar status. I also showed him the copy of Stack's demands. Hogan did not seem inclined to fight for proper status. Eventually the prison filled up as the number of republican prisoners in Derry reached about 60 men. An election for officers took place amongst the prisoners and Hogan was appointed Commandant. I was elected Quartermaster. We learned from the papers that a hungerstrike was in operation in Wormwood Scrubbs, in Mountjoy and in Belfast prisons. When this news arrived I advocated a hungerstrike as an act of co-operation with our comrades in the above mentioned prisons. Hogan strongly opposed me and the matter went to a vote and there was a majority in favour of a hungerstrike. Hogan held that.

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SM according to the Volunteer Constitution it would require a 2/3rd majority to declare a war or to make peace. He defined our intention to go on hungerstrike as a declaration of war. He ~~advised~~^{advised} the men on parade and told them that there were agitators amongst them and that there would be no hungerstrike in Derry as long as he was Commandant. I then drew up an ultimatum demanding unconditional release and had it signed by a representative officer from each county represented by prisoners in Derry. This ultimatum demanded unconditional release within 8 days or a hungerstrike. The Signatories to the document were as follows: Paddy Rankin, Down; P.J. Ward, T.D., Donegal; Seamus Cavanagh, Derry; Sean O'Neill, Antrim; Hugh McManus, Fermanagh; James MacGuill, Louth. This signed document was sent to the Governor and was the cause of strained relations between the signatories and Hogan who knew that if a hungerstrike started the majority of prisoners would take part in it. The British moved quickly, as before the expiration of the 8 days the six signatories to the ultimatum were handcuffed, conveyed under heavy escort to Belfast where we joined the Fleetwood Boat en route to Wormwood Scrubbs.

135 On the boat crossing to England we demanded to be treated as officers and we insisted on travelling first class. Our escort consisted of 6 R.I.C. men and about 50 British soldiers in the charge of a Commissioned Officer. As we were travelling on the eve of Easter Sunday there was a crowd of holidaymakers on the boat and apparently the military officer did not seek any rumpus with us and granted us our demands which included us getting our supper and first class breakfast in our Cabins. Aboard the boat we held a

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meeting to consider the position occasioned by our removal from Derry prison and we decided that our removal from one of His Majesty's prisons to another of His Majesty's prisons would not nullify our ultimatum to the terms of which we unanimously decided to adhere.

136 We arrived in Wormwood Scrubbs on Easter Sunday 1920, and were, on arrival there, interviewed by Sean Hayes, Cork, who was Vice Commandant of the prisoners. We informed Hayes of our demands to the Governor in Derry Prison and our determination to carry out the threat to go on hungerstrike. When Hayes heard this he assumed the superior officer attitude. He told us that we were then under the discipline of the prisoners authorities in Wormwood Scrubbs, and that we could not act as we suggested without the sanction of his Commandant and Prison Staff. His attitude towards us caused us a fair amount of annoyance as we did not like to be put in the position of mutineers or indisciplined officers. The situation for us was, however, solved the following morning by my meeting with the late Joseph McDonough (brother of Thomas McDonough) who had just returned to the "Scrubbs" after spending a week on parole in Dublin. He informed me that he had received sanction from G.H.Q. in Dublin for a hungerstrike for unconditional release. McDonough conveyed this information to the Commandant the late James Lawless. Lawless did not favour a hungerstrike for such terms. McDonough was most emphatic in his opinion that a hungerstrike should be started and stated at a meeting of the prisoners that if he could get only 9 men to sign an ultimatum to the Governor of the prison he would force a hungerstrike. I told McDonough at this meeting that he could count on the 6 men removed from Derry prison, explaining that by the terms of the ultimatum

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handed in by us in Derry our hungerstrike should commence on the following Wednesday at 12 noon (two days hence). McDonough immediately drew up an ultimatum on the same lines as ours which was signed by MacDonough, Frank McGrath, Nenagh, ^{Waterford,} Pax Whelan, and us six Derry prisoners and was immediately handed in to the Governor. A supplementary ultimatum was prepared for the signature of all the other prisoners who wished to associate themselves with our action. This second ultimatum was signed by a large majority of the prisoners and was also handed in to the Governor later that day. In all I think about 100 prisoners signed and about 68 did not sign including the prisoners Commandant who issued countermanding orders to each prisoner who signed either of the ultimatums. The only effect this action had was that four men came off strike and four new men joined the strike. During the first days of the hungerstrike no further incident took place. The position in the relations of those on strike and those not on strike became more strained as each day passed. On the 6th day (the first Monday of the strike) McDonough suggested that we approach the Governor with a request to allow the cell doors to remain open at night so that those not on strike and well in health could attend to those on hungerstrike and becoming weak. I accompanied McDonough on a visit to the Governor to put this matter before him and we got a blank refusal. The Governor informed us that the strike was not official; that he would take no cognisance of our request as our action had not our Commandant's sanction. We returned to McDonough's cell to consider what our next move should be, and it was agreed that at a given signal (which would be 5 minutes before lock up) each prisoner should unhinge his cell door by placing the Bible - which was part of the standard equipment of the cells -

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between the open door and its frame and by forceably closing the door break off the door hinges. At the given signal this operation was successfully carried out by the hunger-strikers. Some of our men not satisfied with the unhinging of their doors smashed the cell furniture and windows and pandemonium reigned supreme for almost half an hour. The military were then brought into the prison, and they discharged a few rounds from their machine guns along each corridor thus compelling all prisoners to take refuge in their cells. Before going to my cell I assisted some others in breaking a large gable window overlooking Wandsworth Common, where a protest meeting of several hundred Irish sympathisers, men and women, were being addressed by the Rev. J.M. Hayes, C.C. now President of Muinntir na Tire and ~~now~~ P.P. Bansha. When those at the meeting heard the sound of machine gun fire from the prison they all knelt down in prayer.

137 Whether it was my physique or the full beard I wore drew attention to me or not, I was later attacked in my cell by six warders who gave me a lot of all classes of abuse and charged me with being a ringleader. They stated that they had a suitable place in the prison for my sort. They then forceably removed me to another part of the prison where I had no further communication with the other prisoners. As I was being removed there I saw ambulance men carrying one of my Derry comrades Seamus Kavanagh on a stretcher from his cell in a state of collapse. He was being taken to hospital. For the first and second day in my new cell I had neither bed nor bedclothes, but my meals were served regularly at meal times. Seeing that I was not eating the food the quantity served was gradually reduced from day to day. The prison chaplain, an Englishman, who appeared to have studied a strange brand of Theology, refused to administer to us hungerstrikers on the grounds that.

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we were all suicides. This Chaplain was removed on the instigation of Joseph McDonough and replaced by a very saintly priest - Rev. Father St. John - who if not sympathetic was at least very consoling to me in my trouble. As the terms of our ultimatum to the Governor did not allow of any compromise, I was prepared to persist in the hungerstrike until the end. During this period many thoughts impelled themselves on my mind, amongst other things, I was thinking of the future of my young wife to whom I was married only a few months. I discussed this matter with Rev. Fr. St. John who assured me that if God expected me to pay the extreme penalty he, Fr. St. John, would convey to my wife my anxieties as to her future, and he also promised to assist her in every way possible. He was most consoling and helpful and advised me to start a devotion to the Little Flower, not then beatified. I had not heard of the Little Flower before this. It was on Fr. St. John's suggestion I started a devotion to her and asked for her intercession to God and promised to pray for her Canonisation if released. Great was my surprise a few days afterwards when I received the first letter after my removal from Derry prison, from my sister-in-law, Sister Saint Columba a nun in St. Louis Convent, Middletown, Co. Armagh, which contained a picture of the Little Flower. I took this incident as a sign that my prayers to the Little Flower were being heard and I felt confident that I would be released sooner or later. On the 12th day of the hungerstrike I was accused by the prison Doctor of eating portion of the food left in my cell. This charge hurt my pride for I felt that the accusation was not only an insult to me but also ^{to} everything I stood for. Like others in the position of a prisoner in enemy hands I felt that I was the custodian of my country's honour, so I could

not let this insult pass without a strong protest and that I should act immediately. When the Doctor and the Warder who accompanied him were leaving the cell I jumped from the bed where I was lying and banged the cell door behind the Warder who had passed out and in front of the Doctor still in the cell. I pushed the Doctor against the cell wall and demanded an immediate withdrawal of his charge and an apology for making it. I told him I was immediately going on a thirst strike as a protest against his insult, which I did. Six days afterwards I was removed from the prison to St. James Infirmary, Chapham Common where 50 to 60 hungerstrikers had already been removed including Frank McGrath, Nenagh, who was appointed Commandant in the Hospital. I was appointed Vice Commandant. The remainder of the hungerstrikers were removed to other London Hospitals. This Hospital was a non-Catholic institution and although a priest came in daily to visit patients he never succeeded in obtaining permission to celebrate Holy Mass there. The majority of the nurses were Irish Catholics and not one of those was allowed to attend to us. The first Friday of the month was approaching and most of our men practiced receiving Holy Communion on that day. I felt that we should insist on Mass being celebrated in the Hospital to enable the men to receive Holy Communion in their customary manner. I mentioned this matter to the priest who advised me to make an application for facilities for Mass in the Hospital to the Committee in charge of the Hospital who met every Thursday. I sent in the application and as a result was interviewed by two members of the Committee who did not appear to know what Holy Mass was. After I explained to those men the importance of devout Catholics getting facilities to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion as often as possible they consented to grant my

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application. The first Friday in May 1920 was the first time Mass was celebrated in that institution. Later we made application to allow the celebration of Mass on Sundays and that all the Irish Catholic nurses in the Hospital be allowed to attend. To the surprise and the delight of the priest and our men this was also allowed, and about 100 Catholic nurses attended Mass in the Hospital on the following Sundays. The priest commenting on our efforts later stated that "if you lads did nothing, in coming to London, except having Mass celebrated here it was well worth your visit to us and its up to us now to see that the practice is continued".

138 About 10 days after this we were all examined by two Home Office Doctors. Dr. Thompson who was in charge of the Hospital informed me after the Home Office Doctors left us that 18 of our men including myself were certified fit for discharge. We were not aware what this meant - release or removal back to the prison - and in order to find out definitely I asked the Doctor to 'phone the Governor of the prison asking him for my clothes and property in the prison to be sent on to me. The Governor agreed to this and told the Doctor to send a messenger to the prison for my belongings. When the Doctor's messenger arrived at the Prison the Governor told him that he had received later instructions from the Home Office that all the prisoners were to be taken back from the Hospital to the prison. This news was serious for us as it would entail a resumption of the Hungerstrike with the possibility that the morale of the men would not stand up to the strain. We immediately communicated with all the other Hospitals in London where any of our hungerstrikers were being treated and with Art O'Brien President of the Irish Self-determination League giving the information we received a General Plan to attempt an escape

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from all the Hospitals in London where our men were being treated was planned. The procedure agreed for our plan of escape was that on the following Sunday when visitors were allowed in to the Hospitals at 2 p.m. our men should walk out with the visitors when leaving. Previous arrangements had to be made with our visitors to provide safe housing accommodation for all us hungerstrikers until we could slip back home. In many cases visitors were asked to bring in overcoats for men not properly equipped with wearing apparel. There was some difference of opinion in St. James's Infirmary between those who were certified fit for discharge, and those not certified; the latter not being anxious to take their chances in London as they were comfortable in Hospital. I was determined on leaving and took the precaution of writing to a County Louth man who had visited me in Hospital - the late William O'Hare, Greenore - then employed in London in L.M.S. Railways, asking him to bring me in an overcoat as I had little clothes in Hospital except my trousers and boots. As I wrote and posted this letter late on Saturday I had doubts of its delivery in time for Sunday, I had had a few pounds from my wife, sufficient to cover the travelling expenses of myself and another to Ireland. Paddy Rankin of Newry - a Derry prison comrade was with me in Hospital and had all his clothes and we decided to attempt to escape together and our intention if successful was to get clear of London in the shortest possible time before an alarm was raised.

139 About 1.30 p.m. on the Sunday of the escape a man whom I had never seen before came in to my ward and enquired if there was a patient named MacGuill there. I asked this man if he was acquainted with MacGuill and asked him his name. He told me he was Thomas Cunningham whose people came from

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Killeavey, Co. Armagh. I knew then I could trust him. He was actually a cousin of mine. I told him of our plan to escape and inquired if he knew London well or could he conduct us to Euston Station. When he assured me that he could guide us I told him to go to the Bathroom and leave his overcoat and scarf there and come back and sit beside my bed to give the impression he was speaking to the bed's occupant. I borrowed a razor, went to the bathroom, shaved off my beard and returned to the ward in my friend's overcoat and scarf and the change in my appearance was so marked that Cunningham did not know me when I returned to the ward. By this time Cunningham had been joined by another cousin of mine - Miss Nance Jordon, Dromintee, Co. Armagh - then employed in the G.P.O. London, and who had visited me in the hospital on a few occasions posing as my sister. I asked her what the position was like outside the hospital doors and if there were many police about on duty. She informed me that at the entrance to the hospital there was a large number of police engaged in keeping a big crowd of visitors from rushing into the hospital before the official visiting hour came. We thought that this would be an opportune time to try our get away. Rankin and Miss Jordon started off first walking arm in arm, whilst Cunningham and I followed them towards the entrance gate. The police attentions were directed to the visitors seeking admission and their backs were towards us so that they did not notice our approach and we passed unchallenged. After turning the first corner of the street Miss Jordon returned to help other prisoners in their escape, whilst Cunningham conducted us to an Ice-Cream shop near Euston Station where Rankin and I remained whilst he went to the station to make enquiries about

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outgoing trains on the Hollyhead route. He purchased two single tickets to Crewe. We did not desire to arouse any suspicions by ourselves purchasing tickets to Ireland as we expected all the exits from London would be stopped as soon as the alarm caused by our escape became known. We were then unaware of the Law in England being so different from Irish Law. The police in England could not take any action against us without specific instructions from the Home Office and the Home Office was then closed as the day was Sunday. Joseph McDonough was aware of this "defect" in English Law as the technique of his escape from another Hospital was much different to ours. When the visitors arrived in his hospital he "fell in" his comrades in military formation numbered them off, Formed fours and marched off through the streets of London.

140 When we arrived in Crewe and when the night mail arrived from London we proceeded to board her we were surprised to hear the strains of the Soldiers' Song from many carriages of the incoming train which contained a big number of the escapees. The majority of our men got back to Ireland before the Home Office became aware on Monday of the escape. There was over 160 of us escaped. Rankin and I travelled via Hollyhead. We separated in Greenore, he travelling to Newry and I to Dundalk. I arrived in Dundalk at 8 a.m. and at 10 a.m. the R.I.C. were searching the town for me. I immediately went on the run as they raided my father's house that morning and I remained on the run until the day of the County Council Elections, 1st June, 1920.

141 Before I pass from this I would like to relate an amusing experience I had as a patient in the Hospital in London. The majority of the nurses attending us were

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English. The Irish nurses were not allowed near us. The nurse attending me was so bigotted that when she passed from one side of my bed to the other she would take a hold of her long skirt to prevent it touching my bed, fearing, as it appeared to me, getting infected with the Sinn Fein virus. Whilst being amused by her antics I took a dislike to this lady as her manner was hurtful to my vanity. For the first few days after the end of the Hungerstrike we were allowed only small quantities of light food which only agravated our appetites but from the medical point of view was proper procedure. Our nurses although hostile were very attentive and if any of us made the slightest noise through restlessness or nervousness one of them would immediately appear to enquire if anything could be done. On my third night in the hospital about midnight who should come to enquire if I wanted anything but the "bigotted" lady. She enquired if I required a Sleeping draught. I said "No, but I would like something to eat as the pangs of hunger endured during the hungerstrike are about to return". She told me that tea for the nurses would soon be ready and if I was able to walk to the kitchen she would be able to get me a cup. I told her how thankful I was and to let me know when it was ready. In a short time she returned with a dressing gown and a pair of slippers and accompanied me to the kitchen where three other nurses were having tea and toast, which they divided with me. Whilst we were partaking of the feed and talking about the "troubles" in Ireland, my nurse went to a gas oven and took a large roasting dish containing baked rice. I enquired what it was and she stated "its your dinner for to-morrow", meaning of course more than mine. I said I never eat more than half that quantity at home, so I will eat the half of it now and the other half will do me to-morrow. She seemed to hesitate as if considering the matter, and I said "Come on, give me the half of it now".

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To my great surprise she got a large plate which she filled with rice apologising for the scarcity of milk and enquired if she should give me jam with it as a substitute. I said, "of course, it will be fine". She added the jam and foolishly I commenced to devour the contents of the bowl. I was about finishing this colossal feed when a Sister Jones - night sister in charge and whom I had already met appeared amongst us. She took in the position at a glance and enquired to know exactly what the nurses had given me to eat. When she heard what I had eaten she became much alarmed - almost hysterical - and lacerated all around her, for the ignorance of the nurses in allowing such a thing to happen. She stated that she would report the matter to a Doctor so that I should have my stomach evacuated. She was about to go out the door to get in touch with a doctor when I closed the door and got my back against it. I said everything I could think would calm her down and told her amongst other things that I often ate twice as much at home after my dinner, and that all I now required was a little exercise in the open air and I suggested that as it was a nice night they should take me out in the grounds for a walk. This suggestion seemed to calm down Miss Jones. She informed me that she had been through all the Great War as a nurse and that she was soon due for retirement and that she had never been previously guilty of allowing anything like this to happen to any of her patients and that this business of my feed was likely to be her one black mark on her professional record. She agreed to take me for a walk in the grounds accompanied by my own nurse who procured a pair of boots, an overcoat and a scarf. The three of us moved off and when passing a small car park in the grounds my nurse pointed out her Studebaker car. I suggested

that the nurse should take Miss Jones and myself for a run in the car so that I could see the sights of London. She expressed her willingness but Miss Jones was more concerned with getting me to take sufficient exercise to save my life but she agreed that should I be alive at the same time the following night she would be pleased to accompany me if my nurse then wished to give me a drive, provided I gave them my word of honour that I would not attempt to escape, which was accepted. I kept both of them to their promises and on the following night after my midnight tea and toast - no rice this time - we set off on a sightseeing tour of the great Metropolis. My Nurse whilst driving the car told me something of her family history including the information that she always spent her Christmas holidays in Argyllshire in Scotland, as the guest of the Marquis of Bute and Lady Bute - the latter being daughter of Sir Henry Bellingham of Castlebellingham. When I informed the nurse that I was a close neighbour of Lady Bute before her marriage she was so pleased that we exchanged addresses and Christmas greetings for several years afterwards.

/42 Previous to the Local Government Elections in June, 1920, the outgoing County Council was 80% Anti-Sinn Fein. Many of the old Councillors had taken part in the Recruiting Campaign for the British Army in the early days of the 1914 - 1918 war. Their Chairman - Doran, set the example by joining the British Army himself. The Sinn Fein organisation by contesting every seat in the election created an atmosphere of a parliamentary election and was vigorously fought. We had some difficulty in getting suitable candidates for so many seats. Each of our candidates had to sign a pledge of loyalty to Dáil Éireann which to some might appear to have possibilities of serious risks to the successful candidates.

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Many of our candidates were practically unknown outside their immediate neighbourhood, not having previously any experience or ambition for public honours. My recent imprisonment, the hungerstrike and subsequent escape, made me well-known and gave me an advantage over the other lesser known candidates. On the day of the election reports came in early that the majority of our voters were casting their Number 1 Votes for me and fearing that my comrades would not get sufficient support to keep them in the running I made a personal visit to all the polling booths and instructed all our agents to concentrate on our other standard bearers. We won the election and many unknown men made their first appearance as elected representatives on the premier body of the county.. The result of the election as far as I can remember was Sinn Fein - 24; Nationalists - 8.

143. At the first meeting of the new County Council held in Drogheda, James E. Murphy was elected Chairman and Phil Monaghan was elected to the Vice Chairmanship - both Brigade officers of the I.R.A. After the election of officers, I proposed a vote of allegiance to Dail Eireann which was carried 24 to 8. The majority of the 8 were former members of the County Council.

144 Mr. Patrick McGee the outgoing Chairman presided at the first part of the meeting of the new Council and when he was vacating the Chair to his successor, I proposed a vote of thanks to him. I pointed out that we of the new generation, appreciated very fully the great services he and his associates had rendered to the county during their term of office and I asked them not to expect hostility from us as we could all co-operate on the important matters that affected

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the well-being of the county. Mr. McGee appreciated those remarks of mine so much that he stated he had come to that meeting with an erroneous impression as he was expecting hostility from what he thought would be a poor type of new representative but he now felt that the affairs of the county could be safely entrusted to the new Council. He then walked down to where I was sitting and shook me by the hand, saying with tears in his eyes, "thank you for your kind words", adding "if all the new Councillors are like you things will turn out well". Afterwards he and I became fast and close friends, as I did with other members of minority.

145 In areas throughout the country where military activities were taking place and casualties on police or military forces ensued, the relatives of deceased police or soldiers brought huge claims for compensation against the county authorities involved. Those claims were brought in the British Courts and were generally ignored by the County Councils who had pledged allegiance to Dail Eireann. As a result of this policy the full amounts of the claims were allowed by default in all cases undefended. In such cases the County Councils not recognising the British Courts, had no intention to pay the decrees. British Military Officers operating in such areas had instructions to seize moneys lying in the Council's Banks thus liquidating the decrees. This type of action by the military authorities had taken place in about three different counties when Dail Eireann to counteract the high-handed action of the British, and prevent repetition in other areas, issued instructions to each County Council, giving allegiance to them, to call a special meeting and pass a resolution dispensing with Banks as their trustees and appoint new trustees who should be members

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of their Council and must be "men of Straw" with irreproachable character. Those trustees should be known to the public but behind those three men there should be at least three members whose financial position must be solvent and would be the real custodians of the Council funds and were not to be known to the public.

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CAUCUS a CAUCUS
146 Mr. Murphy, Chairman of the Louth County Council got instructions from Dáil Eireann to carry out the above plan of appointing new Trustees. He called a special meeting for this purpose and on the day previous to the special meeting all the Sinn Fein members of the County Council held a CAUCUS a CAUCUS meeting where arrangements were made as to who the different trustees should be. The Chairman read his instructions which were discussed at great length and volunteers were asked to fill the three positions where the Trustees were to be known and also the other positions. There was some hesitation in volunteers coming forward and although not a "man of straw" myself, I knew I could easily make myself one by signing over all my property to my wife. I volunteered. The Chairman himself next volunteered and the late J.C. Kieran, Rathbrist, Ardee, also volunteered. The question of the unknown custodians of the Council's moneys next arose and Senator J.T. McGee, Roodstown, Ardee, who has been Chairman of the Louth County Council for the last 21 years and the late J.P. Kearney, Willville, Carlingford, and another whose name I can't now remember, expressed their willingness to act. It was also arranged who would be the proposer and seconder of the Resolution for the three first-mentioned Trustees for the special meeting next day. The other names were not to be mentioned at the meeting. The business at the special meeting the next day caused great consternation not along amongst our opponents on the Council

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but also amongst the Council's officials who had long service with the Council and had never before been asked to do anything so unorthodox. When the special meeting ended the three new trustees with Phil Monaghan, Vice Chairman, the late Charles MacAllister, Secretary of the County Council, and the late P.J. Gilmore, County Council Accountant held a conference and decided to immediately withdraw all moneys standing to the credit of the County Council at the Hibernian Bank, Dundalk, whose trusteeship had been ended by our vote that day.

147 Phil Monaghan was the brains behind the scheme we put into operation. We realized the danger of leaving large sums of money in the County Council offices in Dundalk for any length of time and due to my close proximity to the offices of the Secretary, he was directed that on the receipt of moneys from rate collectors and from all other sources and as soon as he had it checked, he was to make out a lodgment docket in my name in duplicate and to contact me at once handing the cash and dockets over to me for which I gave a receipt by signing both duplicates and the Secretary retaining one.

148 In the practice of this procedure I would some days collect large sums from Mr. MacAllester two or three times as rate collectors handed the cash to the Secretary. When I received the cash and gave my receipt for it Mr. MacAllester's responsibility ended. From my receipt of the money I was responsible; the original system being that I deliver the cash to one of the secret custodians. As those men lived many miles from Dundalk this delivery was found to be both inconvenient and entailed danger to the cash. I had to make other arrangements which I will describe. One of the most useful men I had in Dundalk and a friend of mine and the cause in more ways than one was Dr. J.J. Clarke, a medical

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practitioner in Dundalk, a man with great qualities of character, quiet, silent, sincere and genuinely thorough in anything he undertook. I entrusted to Dr. Clarke sums of County Council money totalling on some occasions £70,000 not one penny of which was ever mislaid or misplaced. This Dr. Clarke was also always at the disposal of the I.R.A. both professionally and otherwise and would be displeased if offered thanks for anything he did.

149 If a raid took place on a Bank in Dundalk looking for the Louth County Council Banking Account, it could not be found. If the Bank had two or three new customers with large balances to their credits the Bank was not made aware that the cash was County Council funds.

150 The second part of our scheme was the disbursements. There was a regular practice in the County Council that payments to workmen would be made fortnightly and to Contractors monthly. Those payments were always made by Paying Orders, with certain wording and particulars on a blue form which was issued and signed by the Secretary. We had new Paying Orders made out with slightly different wording bearing a similar appearance to the old Paying Orders. The new Paying Orders bore the Secretary's signature and were drawn on Mr. MacAllester's personal subsidiary account to which I would lodge the exact amount of cash required on each paying day to meet his paying Orders. As I was seeing Mr. MacAllester practically every day or had daily touch with him I always knew before hand exactly the amount to lodge. An amusing incident took place during this time. Before the old County Council had gone out of office they had successfully negotiated with the Hibernian Bank Dundalk for a loan of £10,000 for some specific work they contemplated at an interest rate of .2%. On a visit to the Munster and Leinster Bank one day I overheard a customer and the Bank Manager discussing a

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Bank rate of interest known as the London Rate. I had never heard of this rate before and I immediately made enquiries and discovered that deposits in a Bank of £1,000 or over for a minimum period of one month at the London Rate would qualify for 5% interest. I conveyed this information to my fellow trustees and we decided to raise the amount of the loan sanctioned to our predecessors and lodge it again in a Bank in the names of our custodians and make 3% profit on the transaction. I personally negotiated this transaction by collecting the amount of the loan and having it lodged again at the London Rate. Mr. McNevin, the Bank Manager, may have known that he was paying 5% interest on a customer's deposit on the same money that was raised on loan at 2% interest he could not officially state that the particular customer who lodged had any connection with the Louth County Council. This Bank Manager proved his worth some months afterwards when British forces raided his Bank to collect decrees levied against the County Council in the British Courts in respect of claims made by dependents of British casualties in an ambush in Dundalk. The British raid on the Bank failed to locate any County Council account. They closed the Bank for a day. The Bank Manager was arrested and detained in the Military Barracks for three days, where he got a gruelling cross-examination concerning his knowledge of the location of the finances of the County Council. He knew many things unofficially. He acknowledged nothing and remained true and steadfast all through his ordeal. Many raids and enquiries were made at the County Council Offices and neither Mr. MacAllester nor his accountant, Mr. Gilmore, or the other officials gave the slightest information to the British. The handling of the County Council's finances was carried out most satisfactorily by all who had anything to do with the matter.

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I personally ran grave risks when either lodging or collecting large sums of money as there was always the likelihood of my being held up on the street. All through this work I took the precaution of having an armed guard of the I.R.A. shadowing me. The military also raided the Belfast Bank and the Munster and Leinster Bank where I had formerly my Accounts. Neither of my accounts were in funds at the time.

BURNING OF CRAIGS DRAPERY ESTABLISHMENT -
DISTILLERY LANE AMBUSH

151 About the time the pogrom started in Belfast and many Catholic houses were burned down by Belfast Unionists a deputation of British ex-Servicemen came to me seeking permission to burn out a number of non-Catholic houses in Dundalk as a reprisal for the Belfast burnings. None of those ex-Servicemen had any connection with the I.R.A. and were previously actively hostile to the Republican cause. I took a very firm action with the deputation. I informed them that the I.R.A. would not tolerate any such reprisals and as I was responsible for all the citizens of the town and their property; any attempt made to carry out the proposal they made to me would be drastically dealt with and that I would give orders to have any person found guilty of such attempts shot. Shortly afterwards an ambush took place in Distillery Lane Dundalk, in which some members of the Crown forces suffered casualties. Immediately after this operation a mysterious fire took place in a large Protestant Drapery establishment named Craigs in which two shop assistants lost their lives. This fire and the loss of life caused intense indignation all over the county of Louth and neighbouring districts in Co. Monaghan and Co. Armagh and coming so soon

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after the ambush it was looked upon by most people as being done by the I.R.A. In fact some individuals who felt sore over what was happening in Belfast came to congratulate me on what they considered a proper reprisal. In this confused situation Mr. Comerford, Town Clerk, whom I have already referred to in the 1916 period - called a public meeting by poster to be held in the Town Hall for the declared purpose of forming a town guard to co-operate with the R.I.C. and British military in preventing future I.R.A. activities. This meeting was attended by a big crowd of large ratepayers and loyalists. The District Inspector of the R.I.C. and a large force of R.I.C. and some British Army officers were also present. I had one of our intelligence officers at the meeting as I had originally no intention of being present myself as I was then on the run, but I wanted to know what was taking place there. Some time after the meeting started my I.O. came and told me the trend of the speeches made at the meeting which I was told cast the responsibility for the fire at Craigs on the I.R.A. As I was in close proximity to the Town Hall I immediately went there, forced my way on to the platform, made a firey speech disassociating the I.R.A. from having anything to do with the burning of Craigs. I pointed out that quite recently I was approached by a section of the British Ex-Service element in town for permission to carry out reprisals in Dundalk for what was happening in Belfast and I said I was forced to threaten the gun on those men to dissuade them. I also promised the meeting as senior officer of the I.R.A. that I would guarantee the protection of all the citizens of the town if the R.I.C. and British military were removed. I pointed out that the I.R.A. as Irishmen had a more practical interest in the welfare of our citizens than any British garrison could have. My speech caused consternation amongst the majority at the

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meeting and no attempt was made to organise a town guard. I immediately disappeared after the speech. On the following day the Irish Independent gave a report of my speech which, I believe, was deliberately distorted to give the impression that it was a section of the I.R.A. that had broken away from me and then approached me in connection with the burning of non-Catholic houses in Dundalk. This report of my alleged speech necessitated a long letter from me to the Independent to clarify the position. The first report, however, had got so much publicity and prominence that it did me a lot of harm in many areas in the country where the true circumstances were not known. My action in publicly announcing the position I held as Senior Officer of the I.R.A. in Dundalk was not good policy for myself or the I.R.A. organisation's point of view, but the diabolical act which had occurred and of which most people believed the I.R.A. were responsible made it essential that I should disassociate ourselves and give a candid exposition of the affair and thus safeguard the good name the I.R.A. always held.

152 The I.R.A. intelligence immediately started to investigate the origin of the fire and eventually found that strong suspicions pointed to at least three individuals one of whom left the town shortly after the burning and has never since returned and the others left the district. Each of the suspected persons were known to be imbued with the teachings of the Russian Revolutionaries. Neither the R.I.C. nor the Military authorities in Dundalk made any move as far as I could see to investigate or enquire into this matter.

153 In or about October, 1920, I had occasion to call

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on a lady in Newry - Mrs. Rice of King Street - who had a Lawsuit pending in the British Courts. My visit to this lady was in an effort to get her to transfer her Lawsuit to the Republican Court. I had also heard that there was a fairly large movement of British troops about to be transferred by rail between Dublin and Belfast so I decided to reconnoitre the railway line to locate likely places for a derailment of such trains. I was accompanied on this journey by J.J. Laying an I.R.A. officer and an Ex-N.T. who now lives in Kortumna, Co. Galway, and who was teaching school in Dunleer, Co. Louth, and lost his job in 1916 when he took part in the rising. On our journey back to Dundalk from Newry along the railway line I fell off by cycle and so seriously injured my knee that I was unable to move. Laying procured a car which conveyed me to Dundalk. The approximate date of this accident can be fixed when I state that on the following Tuesday the late Sean Carroll of Ardee wrote to me that he had got reliable information that three County Louth men were to be shot by Crown forces and that I was one of those men. Poor Sean and another man named Tierney were taken from their beds that night and shot dead by Crown Forces. About the same time two men in Drogheda were also taken out and shot in a similar manner. When I got Carroll's letter I immediately left home and went into hiding. The following night my house was raided and got such a thorough search by brutal R.I.C. that my wife who was expecting the birth of our first baby had the next day to go into hospital from the effects of her experiences during the raid - this was six weeks before the baby was born.

154 Immediately after the shooting in Ardee I communicated with Michael Collins informing him of my predicament and had a reply from him stating that he would like

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to see me at the earliest possible moment. I arranged to go to Dublin and contact him as soon as it was possible for me to travel. I arrived in Dublin on the eve of Bloody Sunday and met Collins in Flemming's Hotel. He advised me not to stay there and not to make myself conspicuous whilst in the city. He informed me that I could always contact him through Frank Thornton then attached to Collins' staff and well known to me.

155 My association with Flemming's Hotel started my early connection with the Republican movement. Anytime I was in Dublin I called there being a personal friend of the proprietor, Sean O'Mahony who was elected T.D. for County Fermanagh in the 1918 General Election. In Flemming's I was always likely to meet I.R.A. officers from different parts of the country. From the early days in 1916 when the leaders of Easter Week were preparing for the Rising it was the location of many important and secret meetings of the leaders. All the Hotel Staff were members of the Cumann na mBan. On one occasion when Dáil Eireann was in secret session after the proclamation of Dail Eireann as an illegal Organisation by the British I called at Flemmings. I was that day taking the remains of a Dundalk man who died in Dublin to Dundalk for burial and on my journey home I called at Flemmings for a cup of tea and met there several T.Ds. with whom I was acquainted. Whilst being served with the tea a message was received by Mrs. O'Mahony from Ml. Collins that Flemmings and other Hotels were to be searched by the British in an effort to capture some of the T.Ds. Mrs. O'Mahony immediately sent some of her girls to houses of her acquaintances to seek accommodation for the men in danger of capture. There were three men at my table at the time and I

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suggested to them that it would be advisable that they should seek accommodation outside Dublin for that night. I volunteered to convey these men as far as Balbriggan where I recommended they could stay with safety. This invitation of mine was accepted by Terence McSweeney of Cork, Philip MacMahon and Joseph Murray who were all dressed in black and could easily pass as the relatives of the deceased person whose remains I had opposite the Hotel in an improvised hearse. When we arrived at the Hotel in Balbriggan I informed the manager that one of our cars had broken down and that those relatives of the deceased required accommodation in the Hotel until morning which was arranged. The R.I.C. at this time were very vigilant in examining Hotel registers and the men registered as Uncles of the deceased person using the names of genuine uncles which I gave them. They remained for the night safely in Balbriggan and returned to Dublin the next morning.

156 On the eve of Bloody Sunday November, 1920, I went to Holles Street Hospital to visit my wife. I asked to see Dr. Cunningham the Resident Doctor, and I explained to him that it was not convenient for me to call at the hospital during visiting hours. I asked him to facilitate me by having the time of my visits fixed for after nightfall as owing to my physique and noticeable lameness I would easily attract the attention of the police or military (I did not tell Dr. Cunningham I was on the run). Dr. Cunningham kindly agreed. On the Monday following Bloody Sunday I again visited my wife on that night. Dublin was seething with British military and police activities and curfew was imposed at an earlier hour than heretofore. Whole blocks of streets were cordoned off and house to house searches were taking place. Dr. Cunningham sent a nun up to my wife's room requesting me to come down to his room. He told me that a cordon was drawn

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across both ends of Holles Street, that a search of each house was in progress, that shots were being fired and that there was little possibility of my getting through the Gordon. He expressed the hope that a maternity hospital would not be searched but he advised me to pose as a Doctor in the event of the Hospital being raided. He gave me his white coat, Stethoscope, Thermometer and other things usually carried by a Doctor and told me to get rid of any letters or notes likely to identify me if searched and gave me some general instructions as to how a Doctor should act. I dressed in his white coat took possession of his equipment and he remained in the room in his outdoor clothes and we sat talking. My attention was attracted to a photograph on the mantelpiece of the room of a lady on horse back and he gave me the name of a well-known Dublin sportswoman and the name of an equally well-known hunter and winner at Horse Shows. This conversation was of a casual nature but it turned out to have important significance a short time later.

157 A Raiding party with little respect for a Maternity Hospital banged roughly on the Hospital door, cursing and demanding that the door be opened. The door was opened by one of the nurses, and a number of Black and Tans rushed in with revolvers in their hands. Some came into Dr. Cunningham's room and demanded us to put up our hands. I protested vehemently against their intrusion into a Maternity Hospital and told them that as a doctor I had serious responsibilities towards my patients. I threatened to bring the matter of their intrusion under the notice of their superior officers. They did not even ask me my name but turned to Dr. Cunningham who was standing beside me with his hands up and enquired who he was and what he was doing there. Before Dr. Cunningham had time to answer a Black and Tan officer who had a photo in his hand looked from the photo to Dr. Cunningham, said,

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this man is "Blank" Collins and gave orders to have Dr. Cunningham removed to the lorry outside the Hospital and put with the other prisoners. The Doctor was removed whilst I protested against their action. Meanwhile the other Black and Tans were raiding different parts of the Hospital and I was left in the room by myself. There was a British Army Officer, who was evidently in charge of a party in the Hallway outside the room I was in, and I went out to him and protested again about Dr. Cunningham's arrest. I told the officer that Dr. Cunningham was the Medical Officer in charge of the Hospital and that I was his assistant and only attached to the Hospital for midwifery experience. He came into the room whilst I was speaking to him and when he caught sight of the lady on horse-back photograph he exclaimed "Oh! Miss So and So, and good old So and So" mentioning the horse's name - "Many a hunt I had on that horse". Turning to me he demanded "What is that photograph doing here". "Oh!", I said, "That is Dr. Cunningham's fiancée". The officer then said, "Dr. Cunningham be D__ed. That man is Collins". I told him that they were making a grave mistake that Dr. Cunningham should be questioned and would be easily able to convince them that he was not Collins. He then gave orders that Dr. Cunningham should be brought in from the lorry. When the Doctor arrived the first question the officer asked him was, "Who is that lady on horse-back and can you tell me the name of the horse she is riding". Dr. Cunningham seemed indignant at the officer's question and told him that he would prefer that the lady's name should not be discussed under such circumstances. The Doctor emphatically denied he was Collins and suggested that the officer should phone the Master of the Hospital, who was a well-known

Loyalist, and ask the Master to come along and identify him. The officer appeared to agree to this suggestion to my horror as it would most likely put me in queer street if the Master turned up. After some further discussion between the officer and the Doctor the officer changed his mind and accepted Dr. Cunningham's word that he was not Michael Collins. He immediately called off the men raiding upstairs and all left the Hospital. Both Dr. Cunningham and myself breathed sighs of relief.

158 On Mr. Collins's instructions I did not stay in Flemmings Hotel. Mrs. O'Mahony got me accommodation in McNamara's Hotel on the opposite side of Gardiner's Place. On the evening of Bloody Sunday after Curfew I saw a raiding party entering Fleming's Hotel. I could pity any lodger found there that night as Black and Tans, Auxiliaries and British Soldiers were running riot all over the place. On the following Tuesday night a raid on both Flemings and McNamara's took place at the same time. There were 14 to 15 guests in McNamaras all of whom were lined up in the corridor and questioned. I was ordered to leave the bed like the others but pretended I could not do so owing to an injury to my knee. They questioned me very much on this. I told them I was in the city to have the knee X-Rayed; that I was a farmer and I acted in a stupid manner. When I satisfied them that my knee condition was not due to a bullet wound one of them remarked "Your So and So would make a poor soldier", and they left me as I was. Another young man who was in my room was not lined up with the others outside but was closely questioned as to how long he was in the city, etc. and they eventually made him go down on his knees and swear fealty to King George and his successors.

159 During my stay in Dublin which lasted over several

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weeks I was in close contact with Frank Thornton, Michael Collins and Gearoid O'Sullivan. My final meeting with Collins was at the North Star Hotel on the 23rd December. Mr. De Valera had returned from America and his baggage was lying in the North Star and Collins was most concerned with the safe custody of Mr. De Valera's baggage and its safe transference to the abode where the Chief was to reside. His home-coming was not then known to the British Authorities. I volunteered, if he got a horse drawn cab, to drive the Chief's baggage to its destination. Collins told me he had other matters to discuss with me and that he could arrange about the baggage.

160 During the course of our conversation, Collins informed me that there were a good many active officers in their respective areas for whom the British Authorities were making strenuous efforts to capture, and that some of those men had come to Dublin and that the Dublin Brigade were not in a position to absorb them all and that it was under discussion at G.H.Q to send some of those men to areas which were not as active as might be expected. He asked me for my opinion on the effect of such a plan. In reply I pointed out that very few of our local officers had any military experience or training and as I would be incapacitated for some time I believed that by sending us a strange officer who had undergone a course of military training would command more respect from officers and men than any of the local officers would get. I agreed that Louth would accept an officer such as he had in mind. Eventually - a week after my arrest - the late Patrick McKenna, a native of Co. Monaghan, was sent by G.H.Q. to Louth. This officer subsequently became

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Brigade O/C. 1st Brigade, 4th Northern Division. Before I left Michael Collins on this occasion he enquired when I was going home. As the following day was Christmas Eve, I said to-morrow. He advised me not to get on a train at Amiens Street Station nor to get off at Dundalk Station. I agreed to take his advice and then asked him "what about your own safety", "Oh!" he said with a smile "I am the safest man in Dublin".

161 In accordance with Collins' advice the next evening accompanied by James Hughes (Booser), a Dundalk man, who had to leave Dundalk after his prominent part in the Distillery Lane Ambush, and whom I had met on many occasions in Dublin with two other Dundalk men, Michael Donnelly and Paddy McHugh all active in Dublin; I went to Clontarf Railway station to get a train for the North. When we arrived at Clontarf I was shocked to notice the scarcity of people on the platform on Christmas Eve and I went to the Stationmaster and enquired when the next train was leaving there for Droghéda. The Stationmaster replied, on St. Stephen's Day at 9 a.m.; that the last train on Christmas Eve had gone. He informed me that a train would leave Amiens Street in 10 minutes that would suit me and that was the last train North that evening.

162 As my getting home for Christmas Day depended on this risky chance I decided to take it. We both ran out on the road and "Booser" Hughes commandeered a Model T Ford Van and compelled the driver to proceed at once to Amiens Street. On the way we exchanged our headgear and I cut off a hefty handlebar moustache and removed my glasses and in this way made a considerable change in my appearance. Whilst I hobbled up the steps leading to the station "Booser" went in front of me and procured a ticket for Castlebellingham where

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I had previously arranged a car should pick me up. I got through the Barrier at the station without incident and was beginning to feel that my disguise was effective until entering a crowded carriage a young Dundalk lady coming home on holidays and who had not seen me for three years, addressed me by my name, thus proving that a woman's powers of penetration are superior to a man's efforts to deceive. I arrived home safely and had my Christmas dinner at a friend's house convenient to my own where I had been joined by my wife. At this house my wife informed me that she had procured a safe place for me to stay that night at another friend's place. When I proceeded to the place mentioned by my wife, the reception I got there was so frigid that I decided against staying there. I knew I would be welcome at the house of Peter Hearty, Linenhall Street and Joe Clarke came and escorted me to Heartys. On our journey there we had to pass several places where Black and Tans frequented but arrived there without mishap. My selection of Hearty's house was most unfortunate. I was not aware that another man on the run had been using the house as a hide-out for the previous week. This man was the late P.J. Berrill who was well-known and had been seen entering and leaving the house. On the night after my arrival in Hearty's house the entire block of street in which the house was located was surrounded by military, Black and Tans and R.I.C. and I had no chance of escape. When I realised this complete infestation by Crown forces of the district and my partial immobilisation as a result of my injured knee I decided to sit out the raid and trust to luck. When the military and Black and Tans entered the house I was sitting at a table pretending to read a newspaper and trusting to my partial disguise. After making a thorough search of the premises they were about to

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withdraw when an R.I.C. man named nicholls caught me by the shoulder and threw me back on the chair I was sitting on saying "arn't you MacGuill who has us out of bed for at least three nights every week for the last three months looking for you". Nicholls' identification was confirmed by a Sergeant Sheridan an R.I.C. Secret Service agent. Eventually District Inspector Gallagher arrived in the house. I had known this man some years previously when he was serving as a Head Constable in Dundalk and he was only a short time promoted to D.I. rank and returned to Dundalk area on promotion. When D.I. Gallagher noticed my lameness he enquired as to my injury and asked if I would be able to walk as far as Anne Street Barracks or if he should provide me with a conveyance. When I considered this matter and the attitude of the raiders who appeared out for my blood I told Gallagher that I would be able to walk as far as the Barracks provided he walked with me, as I did not feel safe with any of the others. He promised to do so and he accompanied me to the Barracks. When we arrived at the Barracks, Gallagher ordered all the other members of my escort into a room and told me to go into the Dayroom. From the Dayroom I heard him addressing the Black and Tans in the other room. He told them most emphatically that if any of them attempted to open the Dayroom door or enter the day room his orders were that they be fired on. He then picked three R.I.C. Constables all bearing the name of Clarke, as my bodyguard for the night. It was then past midnight, He then took me upstairs to his own room and producing a bottle of whiskey invited me to have a drink. I refused the drink, stating I was a teetotaller but advised him to take a drink himself, as I expected he needed it. He appeared to me to be in an absolute state of nerves. He

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took a drink of whiskey and said "James I wish this night was over. I will protect you with my own life. You have no idea how hard it is for me to control those savages (meaning the Black and Tans). I will make a "Shake down" for you to sleep on, but I will sleep none this night and under no circumstances are you to go to the back" (meaning the latrines).

163 He kept his word. I met this officer some years afterwards and he informed me that he got the surprise of his life when he found me in Hearty's house. He had refrained from raiding Heartys for Berrill until he knew that the latter was safely away and he had no idea whatever that he would find me there.

164 I was conveyed to the Dundalk Military Barracks the following day under heavy escort. On arrival I was the only prisoner there. When Sunday came and I found no facilities for attending Mass I became annoyed that I had not made a request in time for facilities to attend Mass. I then made application for those facilities for New Year's Day. I got no reply to this application, I then sent an ultimatum to the Military Officer in charge demanding facilities to attend Mass as a right, which in case of a refusal of my demands I proposed to go on hunger strike until my demand was granted. This ultimatum brought me a visit from the orderly officer who enquired what I meant by "this 'ere Mass".. I explained as best I could all about the Mass and the obligation on Catholics to attend Mass on all Sundays and Holydays. I explained that it would be necessary for me to get in touch with some of our clergy who would require permission to enter the Barracks and also that accommodation would be required for the celebration of Mass. He promised to put my

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views before the Colonel and that he would report back to me later. Meantime, three other prisoners arrived - Pat and Matt Agnew and Seamus Kelly, Dunleer. I arranged with those new comrades that should we be refused the right to practice our religion by those invaders of our country who had no status here except the power to impose their rule by force of arms, we would go on hungerstrike until we were given facilities to worship our God as our religion demanded. Eventually a British Military Sergeant - who himself was receiving instructions for entry into the Catholic Church - visited me and told me that he was instructed by the Colonel to find out what facilities I required for the celebration of Mass the following morning and that he was prepared to deliver any messages from me to my Clergy. I asked the Sergeant to call on the Rev. F. McKeown, Administrator, Dundalk parish, asking him to send a priest the following morning to the Barracks to say Mass. I received a reply that there were no priests in the Parochial House available. I then communicated with the Rev. Fr. Coyle, C.S.S.R. Redemptorist Order, asking him to say Mass for us. He replied that he would willingly do so if he had the consent of the Administrator, Fr. McKeown. This consent I got by sending the Sergeant with a further message to Fr. McKeown. Fr. Coyle arranged to say Mass the following morning - 6th January, 1921 - at 6 a.m. When Fr. Coyle arrived the next morning the four of us went to Confession to him and received Holy Communion at the Mass. When the Mass was over I spoke to Fr. Coyle and pointed out that the following day was the first Friday of the month and that I had a life-long devotion to the first Fridays, and besides that the next day was also the last Friday of a Novena I had started in St. James's Infirmary, London, the previous May for the Beatification of the Little Flower, for the great

favour received by my release from Wormwood Scrubbs Prison and I asked him if he could conveniently come again the next day to enable me to complete the Novena. Fr. Coyle said, "Why not, this gymnasium is nicely arranged and our use of it will not cause inconvenience to any person and I will come to-morrow morning at 7.30 a.m. if you get the necessary permission for me. Father Coyle was 100% Republican and a genuine priest of God, who considered the Spiritual Welfare of the British Garrison - military and police forces serving in Ireland. He stated that many of those men had no opportunity of attending to their religious duties whilst on active service in Ireland and he asked me to include in my application permission for all military and others in the Barracks who wished to attend at Mass to do so.

165 I sent in my application as suggested by Father Coyle but my letter must have conveyed a wrong impression to the Military Authorities. They gave permission for the Mass at the selected time the following day. However, an officer came and questioned me very seriously as to what my intentions were to have Roman Catholic Troops present at our Mass. I told him what Fr. Coyle had said about the difficulties those men had in practising their religion. Finally he promised me that we would have permission to have Mass ourselves but he would not promise that any troops would attend.

166 On the following morning I was rudely awakened at 6 a.m. by the Sergeant of the Guards who informed me that I must dress at once as I was being removed. I could not believe this possible at such an early hour and I informed him that there was a priest coming to say Mass at 7.30 a.m.

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However, I was forced to get up. I took my time in dressing and doing my toilet and by dallying in completing my preparations, take up time until the priest was due to arrive. My breakfast was brought in at 6.45 and I refused to eat it. At 7 a.m. an escort in charge of a military officer - Captain Maxwell - arrived to remove me. Meantime I heard great commotion outside on the Barrack Square. The noise of Armoured Cars, lorrys and marching men, words of command being shouted - all the noise of great general activities. .

167 When Captain Maxwell approached me I explained to him that arrangements had been made by his Senior Officer for a priest to visit the Barracks and celebrate Mass at 7.30 as the day was a day of special devotion in the Catholic Church and I told him I would not leave my cell until 7.30. He got excited when he heard this and he got four of his men into the cell with fixed bayonets to remove me. I got my back up against a wall to prevent the soldiers getting behind me and told Captain Maxwell that there was no need for any excitement; that I was not going to give any trouble other than my determination to await the arrival of the priest. My coolness infuriated him and he told me with some heat in his words that I was leaving the cell when he choose not when I choose and he ordered his Sergeant to pick a firing party of four. When this was done he again ordered me to leave the cell. I answered "No". He then gave the words of Command to the firing party, Ready, Present, and I had the unique experience of standing in front of a firing party and living to tell the tale. I addressed the officer again at this stage and told him it was most unfair to put those young soldiers into the position that they might nervously press a trigger and although not afraid to die, I would prefer to live for another while. He was

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then holding a pair of handcuffs in his hands which he now threw on the floor in a temper and walked out. The Sergeant then gave the command "Order Arms" to the firing party. The officer returned in about 10 minutes' time and repeated the same routine and again I had the experience of looking into the barrels of rifles pointing at me. I again appealed to his better instincts and informed him that I had a principle at stake which I valued more than my life for which I was prepared to make the supreme sacrifice and that I would not leave the cell alive before 7.30 a.m. and should the priest not then arrive, I would leave quietly. Again the officer left the cell. Meanwhile the noise on the Barrack Square continued. Orders were being shouted from every direction and great excitement seemed to prevail. My two comrades the Agnew brothers had been removed from their cells to a lorry on the Square at 7 a.m. and I knew it must now be near 7.30 as I had heard the 7.15 chimes ringing from the local church many minutes past. So I hoped and prayed that Fr. Coyle would soon arrive. I was feeling that if I again forced the military to go through the same ordeal, those nervous and inexperienced soldiers might shoot me. I made my peace with God by offering up a spiritual communion and reconciled myself to His Holy Will. I was quite reconcilled to accept what appeared to be inevitable as Captain Maxwell appeared for the third time. This time he informed me that there was going to be no doubt about it and for the last time he asked me if I was prepared to leave. I again answered "No" and for the 3rd time the words of command were given. I again spoke to Captain Maxwell saying that if he was an officer and a gentlemen he should recognise that the difference between us in time was only a matter of minutes, as at the first stroke for the 7.30 chimes I would surrender. At that moment the

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"Glór Glé Chluig an Aifrinn á bualadh" as Padraig Pearse described in his beautiful story "Iosagán" came clearly on the morning air from the nearby St. Joseph's Church. I then told Captain Maxwell that the fight was over and that I now was prepared to leave. I put on the remaining garments for the journey in a slow manner hoping that Fr. Coyle would arrive. I delayed my departure in every possible way, but to no effect, as the priest did not turn up. The excitement of Captain Maxwell and the Sergeant was so great that when Maxwell threw another pair of handcuffs to the Sergeant saying "Handcuff those B_____s in the lorry" the Sergeant put another pair of handcuffs on the Agnew Brothers and I was left without any. The lorry then started on its long journey to Ballykinlar Camp. Although I fasted all day on the journey there in the hope of receiving Holy Communion, when I arrived at our destination I discovered after I arrived that the Chaplain for the Camp was an outside priest and had gone home before our arrival. I spent nearly 12 months in Ballykinlar.

168 During my time in Ballykinlar I often thought of why Fr. Coyle disappointed me on the morning I left Dundalk Barracks. Apart from his priestly calling he was one of the most determined Irishmen I ever met. He had at that time only completed a series of Lectures in St. Joseph's Church, Dundalk on the persecution of the Catholic Church in Ireland. He was fearless in his denunciation of British tyranny in Ireland. It was only on my return from Ballykinlar when I went to visit him that I learned that on the night prior to the first Friday - the day he was to have celebrated Mass at 7.30 a.m. - he was called upon by two British Officers who

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who produced my application which included the request for permission for the Catholic troops to attend at Mass. The officers wanted to know from Fr. Coyle why he should have suggested their attendance at a Mass requested for prisoners: The officers gave Fr. Coyle the impression that there was some ulterior motive in the whole business. The result of this interview was that Fr. Coyle was told he would not be allowed into the Barracks until 8.30 a.m. the next morning. Fr. Coyle's view on this matter was that the military were convinced that the whole business was a ~~real~~ rouse to get a large number of troops in the Barracks off duty whilst the I.R.A. were attacking the Barracks. This viewpoint, of course, would explain the unusual military activity in the Barracks on that morning before my removal to Ballykinlar.

169 Some little time subsequent to Easter Week 1916, I joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I was initiated by James Toal who was the centre for Dundalk. After being a member of the organisation for a few months the town was divided into three districts and a circle started in each District. Elections to appoint a head took place in each circle and the men appointed were Patrick Hughes a Post Office official, James Toal and myself. Shortly after those appointments I and the two others attended a provisional meeting of the I.R.B. in Dublin. As far as I know at the time or since there was no head Centre for Louth in the organisation before this provincial meeting and a short time afterwards James Toal was elected Head Centre for Louth. At the time of this first provincial meeting at which I was present each ~~Centre~~^{CIRCLE} in the Province was eligible to send ~~that~~ centre as a representative to the provincial

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meeting or Leinster Executive as it was sometimes called; and it appears that the meetings were becoming so unwieldy it was decided that a head Centre for each County only would attend Leinster Executive meetings in future. It was also decided that all active Irish Volunteer officers should be initiated into the I.R.B.

170 The system adopted for initiation of members into the I.R.B. was as follows: The person's name was proposed at a Circle meeting and if approved of there, the person's name was sent to other Circles in the district for approval and it was only on the approval by a number of Circles of the person's admission, that the proposer could approach him and explain all about the aims and objects of the organisation and ask him if he was willing to take the oath. If the person agreed to join, an appointment was then made for him to meet the Head Centre who reserved the right of administering the oath. This system of admission into the organisation entailed, that if any objection to a person's admission arose from any Circle consulted for his initiation, it ended his chances of ever becoming a member.

171 The majority of the Irish Volunteer officers in the Louth Brigade were members of the I.R.B. There were some who were not. From 1916 onwards the I.R.B. were the driving force behind the Irish Volunteers. Later when the system of appointing I.R.A. officers was changed from election to appointment, sanctioned by G.H.Q. it was always a member of the I.R.B. who was selected for promotion, so much so, that in Louth the I.R.B. organisation had almost complete control of the I.R.A. organisation.

172 The position of three Circles in Dundalk as outlined above, with James Toal as Head Centre for Louth

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remained unchanged up to November, 1918. When James Toal died during the Great Flu epidemic I succeeded Toal as Head Centre for Louth and also replaced him as O/C. Louth Volunteers. By this promotion I got into intimate contact with the members of the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. and also with the Headquarters Staff of the Irish volunteers.

173 At the first Executive meeting I attended as Head Centre for Louth. The Chairman was Dermot Lynch. Also present as far as I can recollect were Dermot O'Hegarty, Michael Collins, Greg Murphy, George Irvine or Ervine; Sean Boylan, Meath, and I think Joe McGrath and a man named Murphy and others. The business done at those meetings was a report on the state of the organisation from each of the county Head Centres: The progress made in getting all members of the Irish Volunteers initiated into the I.R.B. organisation: The discussion of means of procuring arms and war equipment. Provincial meetings were held once a quarter and Circle meetings once per month. In the matter of Circle meetings a delegate from another Circle always attended but took no part in the business done.

174 After I became a member of the Leinster Executive the first incident of importance which took place at an Executive meeting was the appointment of a representative on the Supreme Council. This meeting took place a short time after the setting up of the Government of Dáil Éireann in January, 1919. I believe the vacancy to be filled was caused by the resignation of Cathal Brugha from the organisation. It was announced at the meeting that a vacancy had occurred on the Supreme Council and that the Executive would now proceed to appoint a representative. The procedure followed was as follows:- A selection committee was first appointed

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from the representatives at the meeting. A number of men were proposed and seconded for the selection committee and from those five were selected by ballot. Those five members of the selection committee were sworn to secrecy that the business they were about to do would not be divulged to any person outside themselves. I was one of the first selected and as far as I can remember so were Sean Boylan Michael Collins, I think also Joe McGrath and the last man I can't remember. We adjourned to another room and we unanimously selected Michael Collins - he being present - who immediately refused to act stating he was sure of nomination to the Supreme Council from another quarter. He said there was a man he would recommend to the Selection Committee - a man who was a member of the Leinster Executive but not on the Selection Committee - whom he would recommend to us as he was anxious that this man should be on the Supreme Council and if he was not selected at this election he had no other hope of getting on the Council. We foolishly followed Collins advice and subsequent events proved that Collins had one man more to rely on on the Supreme Council. I don't wish to put this man's name on record. I can safely say that not one member of the Selection Committee, with the exception of Collins himself, knew who this man was, other than by name. The procedure in the election ensured that no member of the Leinster Executive knew who the Leinster representative was except the members of the Selection Committee and they were sworn to Secrecy.

175 At this particular meeting a discussion also arose over a proposal by me to get a portion of South Armagh which was then linked up with the Louth area in the volunteer

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organisation and whose officers I wanted linked up with Co. Louth in the I.R.B. organisation. This proposal I fought vigorously on the grounds that the men I wanted to link up were all subordinate officers to me and a part of the organisation of my Battalion area. This proposal of mine was turned down but the vigour and heat I put into the argument in favour of it must have attracted favourable attention to myself, as when the appointment of the five members of the Selection Committee mentioned above arose later I was the first man selected, coming before Ml. Collins who was the second man elected. It is interesting now to think that this vote against my proposal re South Armagh districts at the Leinster Executive was a posthumous recognition of the present "Border" line dividing Northern and Southern Ireland.

176 In connection with my position as representative of County Louth on the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. it was necessary for me to bring up the question of arms supplies for the I.R.A. in my area. I stressed the unenviable position I was personally placed in. As stated earlier in this narrative I pointed out the efforts I had already made and gave details of my visit to Liverpool and my meeting with Neil Kerr, and the arrangements I made with him for the purchase of rifles. I detailed, as I have already described, how those rifles purchased by Kerr passed through my area but were not for us. I pointed out how aggrieved I felt when I actually handled those rifles, in their journey through my area, destined for use in another area. Michael Collins denied all knowledge of the transaction and threatened me with disciplinary action for making false and inaccurate charges and he had almost convinced the meeting when I described how I had provided the transport

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for the rifles and gave day and date for their arrival in Newry in the custody of a local I.R.B. man then resident in Birkenhead named John Murphy, otherwise known as "Jack the Navy". I insisted that my story was correct and that evidence could be procured to substantiate all I said. My summing up of those indisputable facts convinced the meeting that I knew what I was talking about and Collins "caved in" and admitted that the rifles had arrived in Newry as I had stated but that they had been acquired and purchased by County Cork men in Liverpool and that it was he - Collins - who had arranged their importation via Newry area.

177 Some time after the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. had elected a representative on the Supreme Council I had a discussion with Cathal Brugha on matters pertaining to the I.R.B. Brugha told me that he held that when the Republican Government of Dáil Éireann was set up as a de facto Government there was no necessity for the existence of the I.R.B. organisation. He informed me that this was his reason for resigning from the organisation and the Supreme Council. He believed that dual command would always lead to ultimate confusion and that the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. could not realistically function as the Government of the Republic whilst Dáil Éireann remained in existence. He advised me to leave the I.R.B. organisation and to bring any good man I had influence with out with me. After some discussion of the matter he told me that on second thoughts he would not advise such a course of action for the time being. He finally advised me to remain in the organisation and in the position of Head Centre for Louth as my resignation might cause an undesirable person succeeding me. He further advised me to discontinue

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recruiting for the I.R.B. in County Louth as he instinctively felt that the I.R.B. as an organisation would become dangerous to the future interests of Dail Eireann as the Republican Government.

178 Around 1918 - 1919 The British Government made an order that all officials in British Government Services must take an oath of allegiance. At this time Patrick Hughes, one of the Centres of the I.R.B. in Dundalk worked as a postal official in Dundalk Post Office, was affected by this order. Mr. Hughes who is now Irish Consul in San Francisco, was then one of our most useful and enthusiastic workers. His position in the Post Office gave him opportunities to obtain valuable items of intelligence and he had been doing this work for us from before the Rising in 1916, and I considered the work he was doing valuable from the military importance of the information he was from time to time reporting to me. When the question of the oath of allegiance arose he came to me and we discussed the matter, he informed me that he was prepared to take the oath of allegiance with mental reservations so that he could continue his intelligence reports, to which I agreed.

179 Some months afterwards at a meeting of the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. the matter of the oath of allegiance and its effect on Republican interests came up for discussion. I told the meeting that one of my centres in Dundalk had taken the oath of allegiance with my consent and I gave the reasons I had for agreeing. I got severely reprimanded and was threatened with expulsion from the organisation if I did not get rid of this undesirable immediately. Mr. Collins who took a prominent

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part in the laceration I received, stated that a man could not blow hot and blow cold at the same time. One of the most unpleasant duties I had ever to do in connection with the I.R.B. was to dispense with the services of Patrick Hughes and to relieve him of his office and membership. This had to be done as diplomatically as possible so that I should not hurt his feelings as I knew he was genuinely sincere. Afterwards although not a member of the I.R.B. he remained one of our most capable and efficient Intelligence Officers.

180 On another occasion in a most innocent and unconscious manner I fell foul of the I.R.B. and was "put on the spot" for my assisting a Cabinet Minister of Dáil Éireann to get to England. This "wanted" man arrived in Dundalk and reported to me pointing out that he had important official business to transact in England and that it was essential that he should get there in the shortest possible time. I helped him to perfect his disguise and made arrangements with a member of the crew of the S.S. Dundalk belonging to the Dundalk and Newry Steampacket Company operating between Dundalk and Liverpool, for getting him across to England. I supervised his getting aboard. He gratefully sent me a postcard from Manchester a few days later informing me of his safe arrival. Shortly afterwards when waiting in rooms in Parnell Square, Dublin, for a meeting of the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. to assemble, Michael Collins, who was present, produced a copy of the Hue and Cry (an official R.I.C. periodical) which contained four photographs of wanted men for whose heads there was a reward offered. The names of those wanted men as far as I can remember were Cathal Brugha, Richard Mulcahy, Michael Collins and the man, whom I assisted to get across to England.

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When shown the periodical by Collins I said pointing to one of the photographs ^{SAYING} "He is safe anyhow". Collins sharply enquired "What do you mean? "I arranged to get him across to England last week" I innocently replied, "and I had a postcard since notifying me of his safe arrival" and at the same time I produced the postcard. Collins got excited and jumped up from where he was sitting and said in a most officious manner, "Seamus, do you realise what you have done? You - a responsible officer in the I.R.A. assisted a Cabinet Minister to desert" and he told me I could consider myself under arrest for being guilty of such an act.

181 I remained in the room until the Executive Meeting assembled and got ready to commence business. The first matter the meeting discussed was my unenviable position in being a party to helping the man out of the country. My plea of helping in good faith a Minister of State in carrying out what I was told was part of his official duties exonerated me from any wilful error in the matter. This incident caused me great embarrassment and taught me a severe lesson. At the moment my memory can't recall if this man was subsequently reinstated as a Cabinet Minister.

FOREIGN SERVICE VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT.

182 An order was made by the Supreme Council that all members of the I.R.B. were to be individually asked to volunteer for foreign service and I approached all members of the organisation in Co. Louth. I explained to each man that the nature of such foreign service might entail action which might affect some men's consciences and that it should be borne in mind that any man who had any qualms or conscientious

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scruples was not expected to volunteer and that nothing less would be thought of him if he refused. As far as I can remember 60% of the men volunteered. The names of those who volunteered were listed and numbered and the numbers only were sent on to the Supreme Council. Lots were to be drawn for men required for such foreign service activities. I understood at the time that the elimination of some members of the British Cabinet and other prominent enemies of our country living outside Ireland were included in the plans for those foreign service volunteers. The instructions I received in this matter were personally given to me by Richard Mulcahy.

My Successor on the Leinster Executive, I.R.B.

183 My period as Head Centre for Louth and representative on the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. was due to expire about the Spring of 1921. In connection with this matter I would like to point out that after my talk with Cathal Brugha in the spring of 1919, I made little effort to push forward the I.R.B. organisation in Co. Louth. During my various terms of imprisonment in 1919 and 1920, Sean Gormley of Dundalk deputised for me when meetings of the Leinster Executive were held. When I was arrested in December, 1920, and sent to Ballykinlar I felt that he would be my successor. Mr. Gormley knew my views on matters concerning the I.R.B. organisation. He was appointed my successor as Head Centre for County Louth and Louth's representative on the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. He faithfully carried out my policy of refraining from recruiting new members merely keeping the organisation in existence.

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MILITARY OPERATIONS IN DUNDALK AREA.

184 The military operations in County Louth were not as numerous as was the case in some of the Southern areas. This was not due to any want of initiative or cowardice amongst the officers and men in the I.R.A. Many of our planned operations for one reason or another did not materialise. We were one of the first areas in Ireland to carry out an extensive raid for arms. We carried out this operation in conjunction with the South Armagh Battalion and about 40 men from Dundalk took part. The raid was on Ballyedmond Castle in County Down which was then occupied by a serving British Officer - Major Nugent - and situated on the shores of Carlingford Lough within easy distance of Newry town then and now a strong military post. The people of the district were Unionist. This raid was a most creditable performance; to get so many men to the vicinity of the Castle and get them back without casualties or losses. The Castle was thoroughly searched and some arms found there. The date of the raid was 11th-12th May, 1919. It was an ambitious and dangerous operation to carry out entailing much preliminary organisation and was a magnificent success as far as organisation and the manner the plans were carried out by all concerned.

185 When headquarters recommended attacks on R.I.C. Barracks we made plans to carry out our instructions but we were faced with a scarcity of rifles so we decided to attack three armed patrols of R.I.C. who generally patrolled the Town simultaneously and if successful, obtain the much-wanted rifles for use in Barrack attacks. Bad luck dogged us at every move. For one reason or another the disarming of those patrols were postponed on at least two occasions and on the

night on which the operations were carried out, we had the misfortune of losing one of our best men - Thomas Mulholland - who lost his life in an attack on the Bridge Street patrol. We then decided to attack two R.I.C. Barracks, Ballymascanlon and Blackrock with revolvers and bombs but on the day prior to that fixed for the attacks both Barracks were evacuated. The same thing occurred in connection with plans to attack Omeath and Louth R.I.C. Barracks. The men engaged for those attacks had to content themselves with the burning of the empty buildings.

186 I am not competent to deal with the other operations which took place in Dundalk area. My numerous arrests frustrated many plans which had been made and which were carried out or attempted in my absence.

Re Relations with Ml. Collins.

187 As I have had occasion to mention a few tiffs I had with Michael Collins during the course of this narrative I do not want to convey the impression that there was anything but the best of relationship existing between us. Apart from my admiration and the respect I always had for him as my superior officer I considered him as a close personal friend of mine and very many personal gestures of his satisfied me that those feelings were mutual. On the occasion of my marriage he was very anxious for me to be wed in the uniform of a Volunteer Officer and when I told him that I didn't possess a uniform he insisted on sending me on his own together with a wedding present by a special messenger to Dundalk on the day before the wedding but unfortunately the uniform would not fit me. The anxiety he expressed for my safety on the last occasion I was speaking to him prior to the Truce when, on Christmas Eve, 1920, he cautioned me against boarding the train at Amiens Street Station, Dublin, and also

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against my leaving the train at Dundalk proved that he had a keen interest in my personal safety.

188 I had occasion to meet him after the signing of the Treaty - and when he was Chairman of the Provisional Government - when I conveyed messages from him to the Headquarters of the Anti-treatyites in Suffolk Street, and I believe that the messages I carried that day led up to the pact arranged at a subsequent Ard Fheis between President de Valera and himself. This was the last occasion on which I met him and as it was before the split in the I.R.A. took place there was still a hope in my heart that the dreaded division in the Army would be averted. We parted as the best of friends.

189 Any clashes that Mr. Collins and I had took place at meetings of the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B. and were mainly due to our respective temperaments and his zeal for perfection.

190 I have already referred to my attendance as a spectator at the first meeting of Dáil Éireann on the 21st January, 1919, which I consider the most important function I ever attended. The impression made on my mind that day is so indelible that I can still hear the voice of the Clerk of the Dáil calling out the names of the elected representatives and the answers for the many representatives who were prisoners in English Jails "Tá sé faoi ghlas ag an Gall" (he is under the key of the Enemy). All the elected representatives at liberty were present except the Irish Parliamentary Party representatives and the few Unionists' representatives who did not attend although summoned. A notable exception in the attendance of the Sinn Fein representatives was that of two men - Michael Collins and Harry Boland - who were engaged that day in perfecting

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the arrangements for an escape of Republican prisoners from Lincoln Prison in England where de Valera that day elected as President of the Irish Republic - was confined. I understood that Cathal Brugha was Chairman of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. and as such was in effect the President of the Republic. The proclamation of 1916 visualised a Provisional Government to carry on the work of the Republic until the Irish people had an opportunity to elect a Republican Government. The Provisional Government was in reality the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. from 1916 up to January, 1919. The selection of Cathal Brugha to preside at the first meeting of Dáil Éireann to my mind at the time indicated that the effectiveness of the I.R.B. as a secret controlling influence in the Republican cause should be ended. I was conversant with the constitution of the I.R.B. and when I realised that the I.R.B. organisation was being continued after the setting up of the Government of Dáil Éireann and, as I thought, that the objects of the I.R.B. organisation had been achieved. I was surprised that the I.R.B. continued in existence and it was to clarify the inconsistency as it appeared to me that I approached Cathal Brugha as I have already said.

191 . When the first meeting of Dáil Éireann terminated on that memorable day I felt pride in the setting up of a Republican Government supported by a great majority of the Irish people and I resolved to carry out my duties as an officer of the army of the Republic no matter what danger or sacrifices such work entailed, and every action of mine and every sacrifice I made was borne for the benefit of that Republic to which I had sworn allegiance.

WITNESS: John Mc Coy
DATE: 9. 2. 50.

SIGNED: James O'Connell
DATE: Feb 9. 1950