

Arriving in Dublin I went to the Restaurant in Henry Street where I expected that I might meet Griffith or some of the others. I had a short talk with Mrs Wyse-Power but her only news to me was that 'there was bad news from Kerry' but she gave me no particulars.

Having arranged for Sunday with O'Loughlin, I planned to spend the night with my friend Hugh A. MacCartan at Gilford Avenue, Sandymount.

After 11 p.m. when MacCartan and I were undressing to go to bed, O'Loughlin arrived at the house. He told me that MacNeill, learning that I was in Dublin, asked O'Loughlin to bring me along to see him. He was in Dr. Seumas O'Keilly's house, Rathgar, and O'Loughlin and I went there.

Going in to one of the sitting-rooms, I met MacNeill who asked me what I was up in Dublin for. My reply was 'To do anything I am ordered to do'. I do not remember precisely what he said but the general trend was that things were in a very unsatisfactory state, that things had gone all wrong, arrangements had been badly handled and had already broken down. He proposed accordingly to call off the "Mobilisation" that had been arranged for Easter Sunday.

While we were talking Tomás MacDonagh arrived and was shown in direct to MacNeill. He did not sit down nor take off his overcoat nor did he, so far as I remember, have any talk with anyone save MacNeill. I was standing beside them - just the three of us., when MacNeill explained that he proposed to call off all 'manoeuvres' and everything that had been arranged for Easter Sunday. MacDonagh was extremely solemn, almost tense as he was told this and said to MacNeill - "You realise of course that you are issuing an order which may not be obeyed". MacNeill's [5] reply was equally tense "Well the responsibility for disobedience will be on those who disobey". MacDonagh then said 'I will have to consult my friends about it'. He then left and as I recollect it, left without any exchange of conventional civilities. My memory of this important interlude is that it did not take more than a couple of minutes, that MacDonagh did not speak to anyone in the room except MacNeill. He did not sit down but just stood for the couple of minutes necessary to speak to MacNeill.

MacNeill then went on to discuss with me the arrangements for calling off the mobilisation and asked me if I was prepared to bring word to some of the Northern units. We discussed this and eventually it was agreed that I would leave on the Sunday morning train for the North along with O'Loughlin. The latter was to go to Coalisland and make contact with the Belfast crowd while my instructions were to go to Drogheda, see Dr. Bradley, show him the order from MacNeill directing that all operations for Easter Sunday were off and through Dr. Bradley have the instructions conveyed to the Volunteer officers and key men in Drogheda and the surrounding districts.

I should perhaps mention that amongst those present in Dr. O'Kelly's sitting room were Arthur Griffith, Paudeen O'Keefe and Seán Fitzgibbon. James MacNeill and Dr. O'Kelly were sitting at the fire chatting. I left with O'Loughlin and spent the night with him at his house (Beech Lawn on the Rathgar Road). Next morning (Easter Sunday) we went to early Mass at Rathgar Church and then caught the 10 a.m. Belfast train at Amiens Street.

I left the train at Drogheda and proceeded to Dr. Bradley's house and read over MacNeill's order which he undertook to have conveyed to the local Volunteer leaders. My instructions from MacNeill were that having conveyed his message I was to proceed home - it was apparently the intention to convey to the Authorities that nothing unusual was afoot. There was no train to Belfast until the late afternoon and Dr. Bradley invited me to stay and have lunch with him and his family. I did so and after lunch he took me for a run in his motor along the Boyne Valley. While we were going along we met on the road a group of young men who were obviously Volunteers and were laden with their shoulder pecks and were apparently all set for manoeuvres. There would be, so far as I can recollect, about twenty of these. I was somewhat taken aback to see these men on the road and asked Dr. Bradley if he had given MacNeill's order to the Drogheda leaders.

I do not remember what his reply was but I wasn't satisfied and asked him to stop. I got out and asked them who was in charge or in command. A young man came forward and I told him of MacNeill's instructions which had appeared in that day's Sunday Independent and that I had come from Dublin with MacNeill's order and that the instructions were that no activities were to take place and that the men were to disperse and return to their homes. The leader, whom I afterwards came to know well as Phil Monaghan. (the present Cork City Manager) was extremely reluctant to accept the order and questioned either the order or MacNeill's authority. However I explained that all I could do was to convey MacNeill's message and leave it to himself to disband his men or otherwise. I pointed out that [6] similar messages had gone to all parts of the country calling off the mobilisation. I learned later that Phil Monaghan and his men were "all set" for the destruction of one of the main line bridges but no doubt this plan of activities will be recorded by him.

I caught the evening train for Belfast and proceeded to my home. My recollection is that the train arrived some time around 6 p.m. I know that I was only a short time home and having tea when my close friend and associate Tadhg Smyth came in. He was anxious to know what had happened in Dublin and I told him briefly and asked him about Tyrone and if they had returned after O'Loughlin had delivered MacNeill's message. To my surprise he told me that they had not seen any sign of O'Loughlin. Shortly afterwards O'Loughlin himself arrived and explained that on reaching Tyrone (I cannot now remember definitely but I think it was Coalisland) he learned that the Belfast men had already returned to Belfast.