

Part of Bulmer Hobson's statement on the Rising WS81, beginning on page 11

The first definite information I had that an insurrection was to occur in the immediate future was late in the evening of Holy Thursday, when J.J. O'Connell and Eimer O'Duffy came into my office and, told me that an insurrection had been planned for the following Sunday. With them I went immediately to MacNeill's house at Rathfarnham, arriving a considerable time after he had gone to bed. We got MacNeill up and hastened then to St. Enda's to see P.H. Pearse, arriving about 2 a.m. knocking Pearse up. MacNeill, O'Connell and I went in to see Pearse, leaving O'Duffy, who was not a member of the Executive, outside. Pearse then admitted that an insurrection was to take place, and told us that nothing we could do could prevent it. This was in striking contrast to the assurances which he had so recently and so frequently given, that he was acting loyally with his colleagues on the Executive Committee. MacNeill, O'Connell and I then returned to MacNeill's house, where MacNeill, as Chief of Staff, wrote an Order authorising me to take complete charge in Dublin, and to take all necessary steps to prevent the Volunteers being drawn into taking the initiative in an offensive action against the Government. MacNeill wrote a second Order directing O'Connell to proceed to Cork, and to take complete charge there, with the same object in view. I arrived early on Good Friday at the Volunteer office after this night-long activity, and immediately my office staff arrived, I set them all to work burning correspondence and lists of names, so that, whatever happened, the authorities should not come into possession of the names of our members throughout the country, and this is one of the actions which contributed to the absence of information on the part of the police during and subsequent to the Insurrection. Barney Mellows and Seamus Cooling were members of the staff at that time. Apparently after we had left him, Pearse communicated with some of his friends, because, quite early on Good Friday morning, McDermott and McDonagh went to MacNeill's house. They appear to have told him that the Rising was inevitable, and to have convinced him that he could do nothing. It was often easier to convince MacNeill that nothing could be done, than it was to spur him into positive action. MacNeill thereupon sent me an Order countermanding the Order which he had given me a few hours before, and stating that he was on his way in to the Headquarters office. I waited for him in vain for several hours, and spent the time in hurrying on the destruction of our papers. I realised, by this vacillation on MacNeill's part, that it was impossible to take further definite action, and, at any rate, events by then had got completely out of our control. That afternoon I was asked by Seán Tobin, who had succeeded me as Chairman of the Leinster Executive, to attend a meeting of the Leinster Executive of the I.R.B at Martin Conlon's house in Phibsboro. I was reluctant to go, and did not see any purpose to be served, and at the same time I had a suspicion that this was a ruse to get me out of the way. I yielded to the importunities of Seán Tobin to attend, as I was impelled partly by my curiosity as to whether my surmise that the meeting was a ruse to get me away from Headquarters was correct. I was, therefore, not surprised when, as I entered the house, some members, who were armed with revolvers, told me that I was a prisoner, and could not leave the house. I felt that I had done all I could to keep the Volunteers on the course which I believed essential for their success, and that there was nothing further I could do.

On Easter Saturday, while I was still a prisoner, MacNeill was again galvanised into action by Sean Fitzgibbon and Colm O'Loughlin. Both had been induced to go on journeys to Kerry in connection with the projected landing of arms from Germany, and Fitzgibbon, at any rate, undertook this because he had received explicit assurances, I think from Pearse, that I was enthusiastically in favour of the project. Fitzgibbon's recollections of this, and his subsequent efforts to prevent the insurrection in conjunction with MacNeill, will corroborate and amplify my recollection.

I was released from Martin Conlon's house on Easter Monday evening about 6 or 7 o'clock, and my first object was to get in touch with MacNeill and find out what the position was.