



### 3.0 Those who Set the Stage

### 3.2 Republicans and those who would resort to physical force

#### 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough

They contributed to the Rising by revitalising the Irish Republican Brotherhood and promoting the Irish Volunteers.

Throughout the nineteenth century the republican movement tended to wax and wane: it experienced a particularly low ebb for the ten years following the death of Parnell in 1891. At the time most nationalists looked to parliamentary politics as the only feasible and moral means of advancing Ireland's cause. Home Rule was the objective: most people believed it was inevitable and that it would transform the Irish economy. While some hoped that it would lead to eventual separation from Britain, most people accepted Ireland's role as part of the United Kingdom - the most powerful empire on earth: for many their situation was not particularly irksome.

While dormant, the republican tradition, however, was not dead. There was always a minority of people who believed that Britain had no legitimate claim to jurisdiction over Ireland. They also felt that Home Rule would bring little material benefit to Ireland and that the only worthwhile objective was absolute independence. Considering how well-nigh impossible it was to wrest any concession from Britain by constitutional means (as was the experience of O'Connell with Repeal of the Union and of Parnell with Home Rule), the only option for republicans appeared to be physical force.

## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough

In the early years of the twentieth century republicanism underwent a revival in Belfast. The main activists were Denis McCullough (1883-1968) and Bulmer Hobson (1883-1969). McCullough, the son of a Fenian, came from the Falls Road and was educated by the Christian Brothers. He worked as a piano-tuner in Belfast where he eventually set up a music business, which he later transferred to Dublin. He joined the IRB in 1901, but found that it lacked direction and was in effect moribund.

Hobson came from a Quaker background in Hollywood, Co. Down and was educated at the Friends' School, Lisburn, Co. Antrim. A printer by trade, he became interested in Irish culture and the republican movement and joined the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association. He established the Protestant National Society as a means of imbuing young Protestants with the republican vision. In 1903 he established Fianna Éireann, a form of scouting organisation for boys which was named after the legendary Fianna. Initially, Fianna Éireann made little progress, but in August 1909 it was re-launched by Hobson and Countess Markievicz. The new version had considerable success, becoming a notable feature of the republican movement, two of its early recruits, Con Colbert and Seán Heuston, among those executed after the 1916 Rising.

In 1904 Hobson was sworn into the IRB by McCullough. The following year they combined in founding the Dungannon Clubs, the name commemorating the Volunteer conventions seeking parliamentary reform held at Dungannon in 1782-3. The Dungannon Clubs promoted extreme nationalism, one of their main concerns being the high level of recruitment to the British army. They were eventually subsumed into Sinn Féin.

Hobson and McCullough were involved with Tom Clarke and Seán MacDiarmada in reforming the IRB into an effective organisation. McCullough was chairman of the Supreme Council at the time of the 1916 Rising, but the Military Council did not inform him of the final details. Due to the confusion arising from Eoin MacNeill's countermand he was unable to play an effective part in the Rising. Hobson had a major role in the formation of the Irish Volunteers, but lost credibility when he acquiesced in allowing Redmond to take control of the organisation, despite the fact that he did it for good reasons. No more than McCullough, Hobson was not privy to the final arrangements for the Rising; however, when

## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough

he suspected on Holy Thursday that it was planned for Easter Sunday he informed MacNeill of his suspicions, thus precipitating the crisis. To ensure that he caused no more trouble, the Military Council had him placed under arrest until Easter Monday. He did not take part in the Rising, claiming afterwards, 'I was not going to be driven against my judgement by being faced with a fait accompli'.

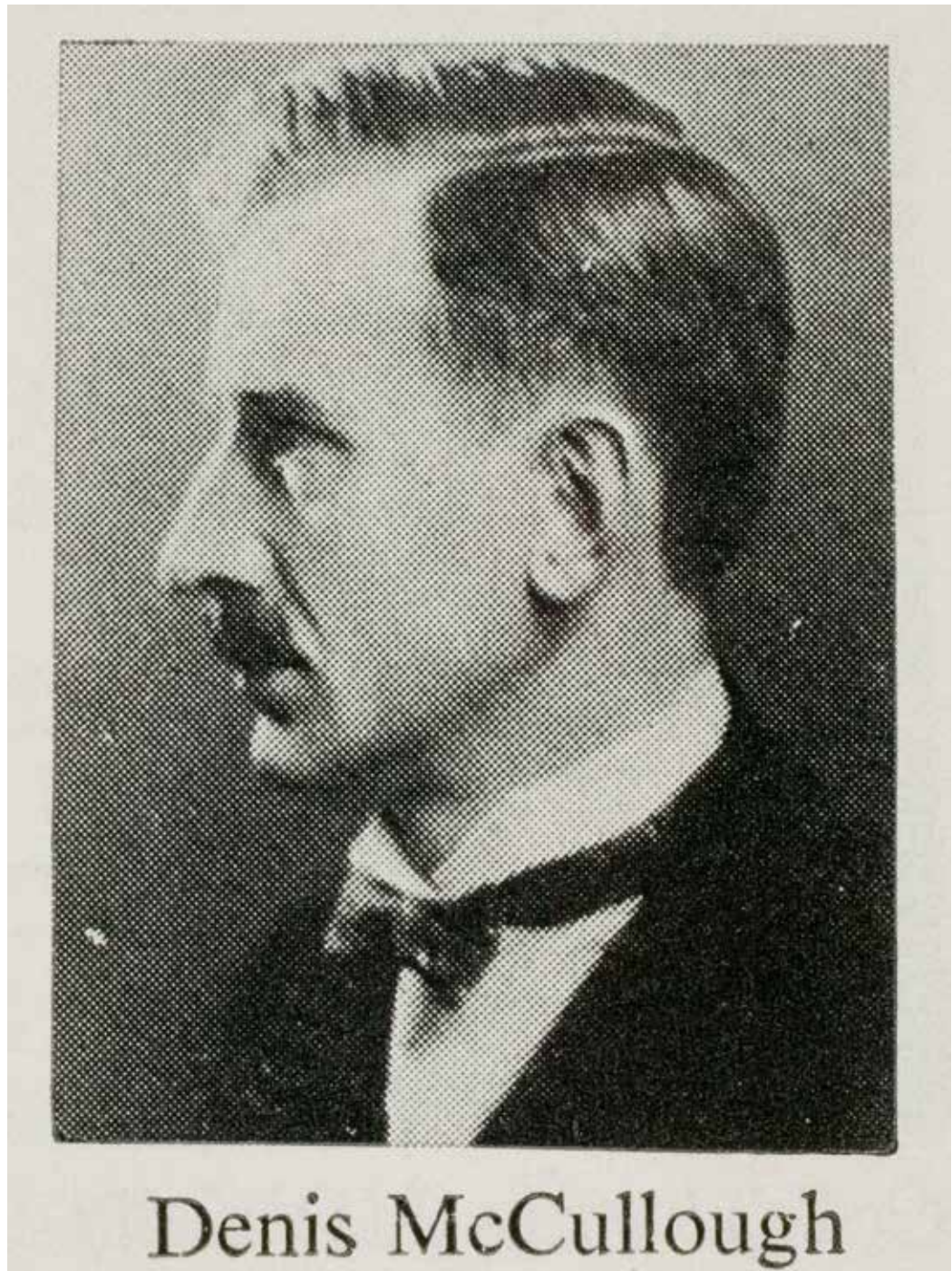
### 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



Bulmer Hobson. (Ms. 13,174(7), Hobson Papers).

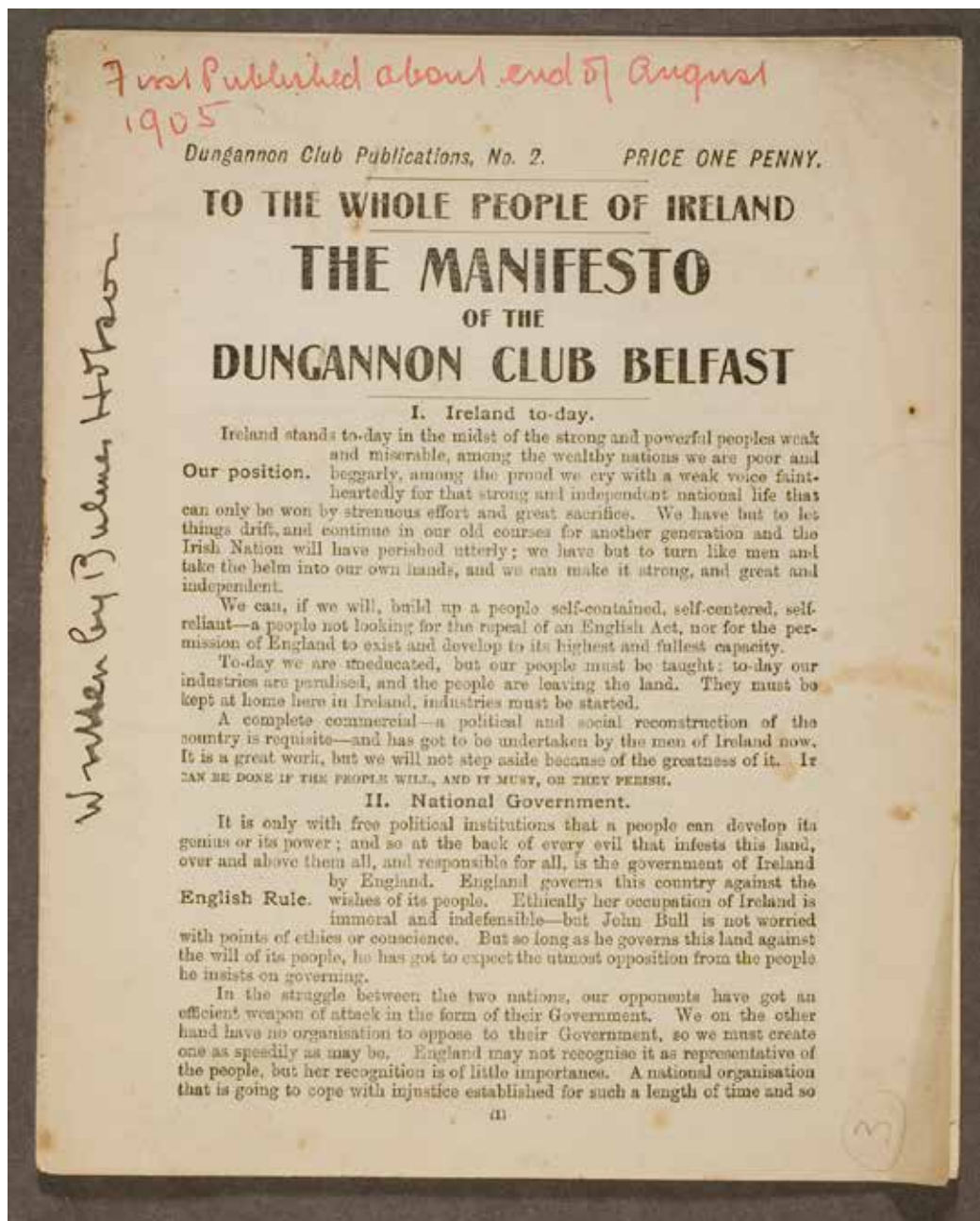


### 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



Denis McCullough.

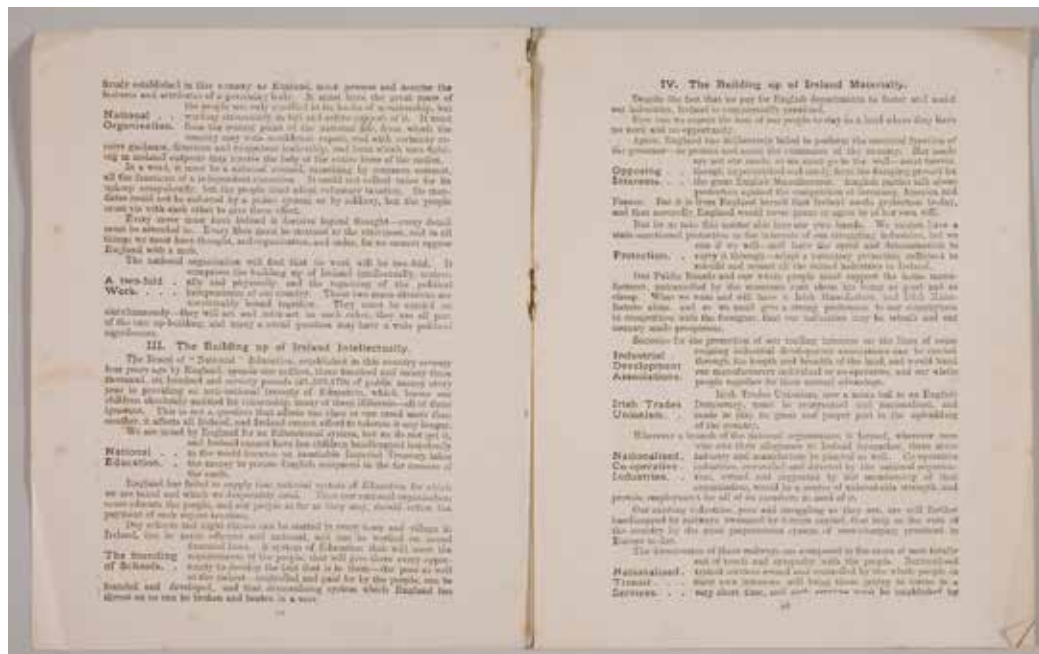
3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



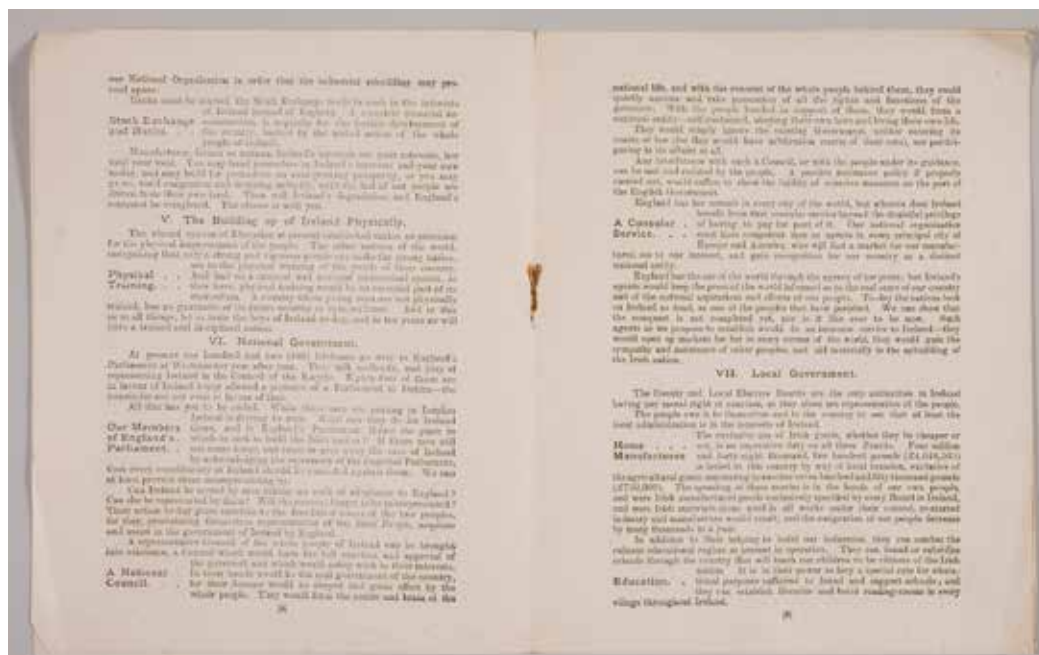
Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c.Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).



## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough

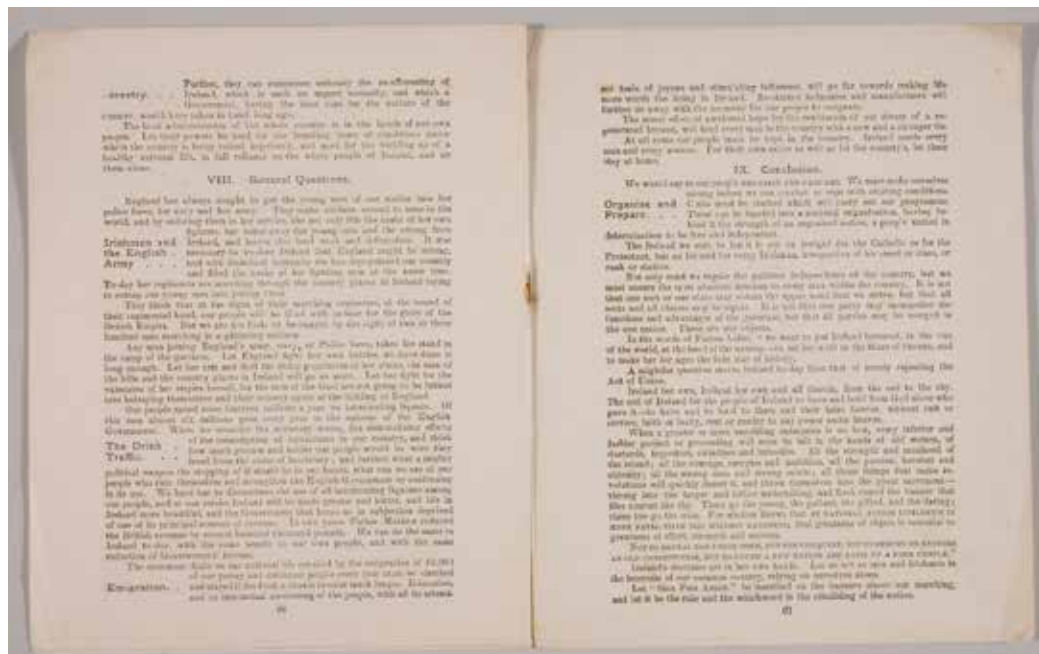


Manifesto of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c. Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).



Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c. Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).

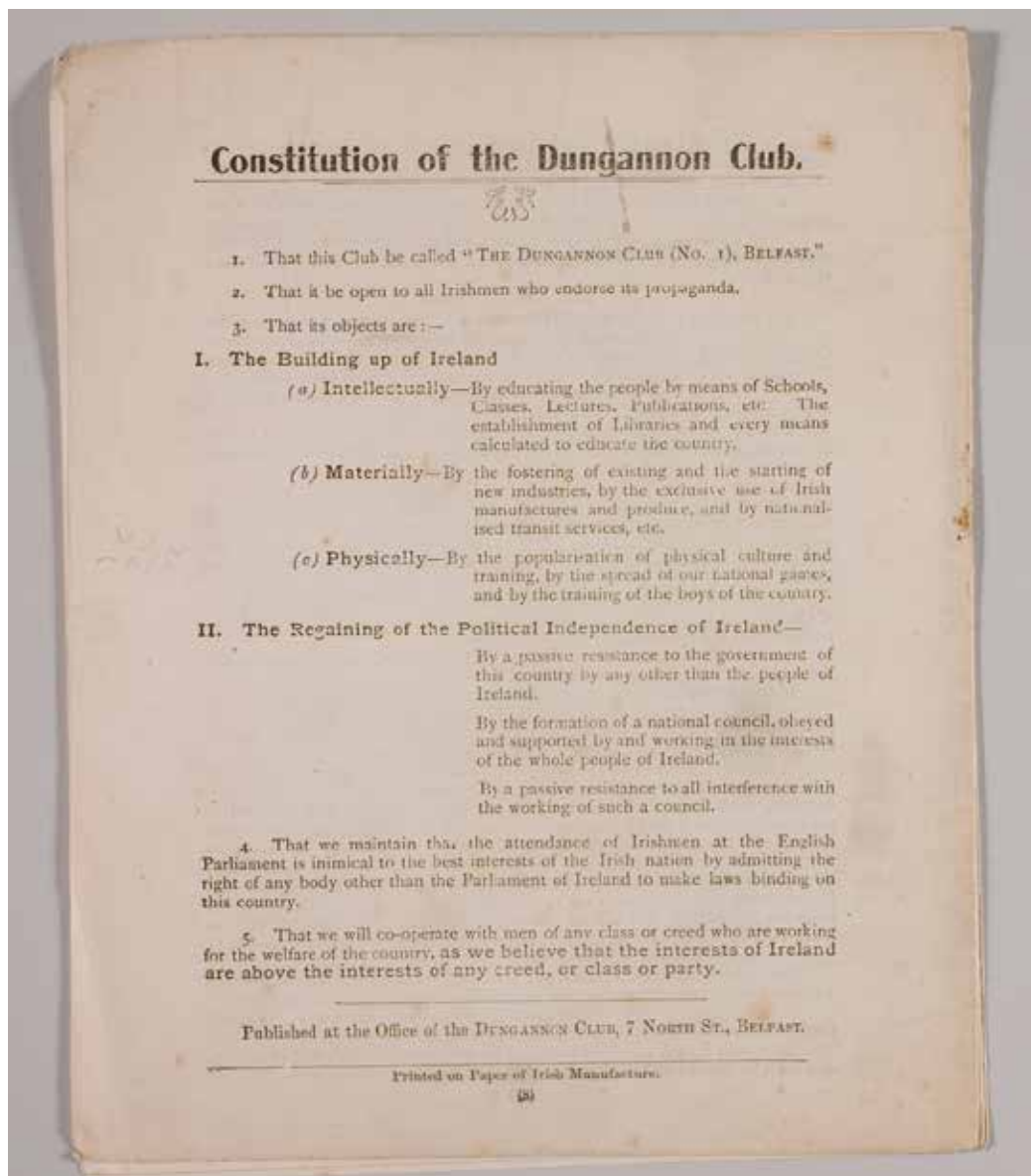
### 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c.Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).



## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough




Manifesto and constitution of the Dungannon Club, Belfast, c.Aug. 1905. (Ms. 13,166(4), Hobson Papers).

## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough

32

# Will You Help?



**N**A FIANNA EIREANN (or National Boy Scouts' Organisation) was founded with the object of developing the national and military spirit amongst the boys of Ireland. The Organisation is governed by the boys themselves, and its programme includes every element of military training: Physical Culture, Infantry Drill, Morse and Semaphore Signalling, Camp Life, Scouting in all its branches, First-Aid, and Ambulance Work. Instruction in Irish and Irish History are also included in the course of training: The Fianna is organised in fifty-four centres throughout Ireland.

The Central Council appeals to every Irish Nationalist to help in spreading the movement in every town and village in Ireland. For this great work the Council has instituted an Adult Association, known as HONORARY FIANNA, consisting of Irish men and women who are willing to help in propagating the boys' movement. A small monthly subscription to the Organising Fund is expected from all Honorary Members.

---

FIANNA HEADQUARTERS,  
12 D'OLIER STREET, DUBLIN.

**HONORARY FIANNA  
APPLICATION FORM.**

No. on Roll.....

I am willing to help, as far as I am able, in pushing the propaganda of NA FIANNA EIREANN throughout Ireland, and I am willing to subscribe \*threepence <sup>threepence</sup> ~~sixpence~~ per month or †.....per week to the Fianna Organising Fund. Please put my name on the Roll of HONORARY FIANNA.

Signed.....

Address.....

Date.....

\* Strike out the words not required    † Fill in amount of weekly subscription, if you desire to subscribe weekly.  
A Scout will call regularly for your Subscription.

NATIONAL  
LIBRARY OF

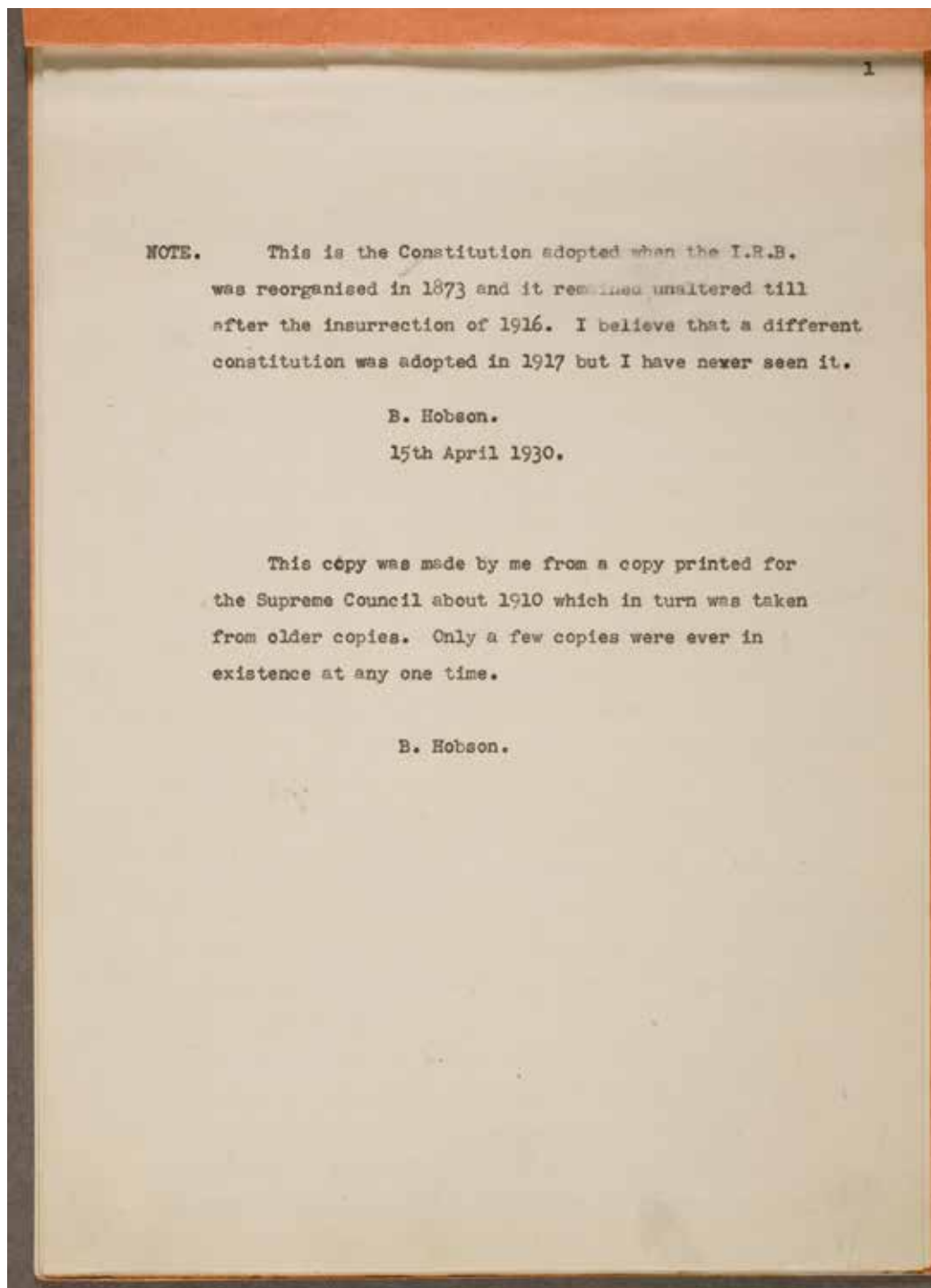
Application form for Fianna Éireann issued probably soon after its re-launch on 16 August 1909.

### 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



Members of Fianna Éireann engaging in medical field training. (Keogh 210).

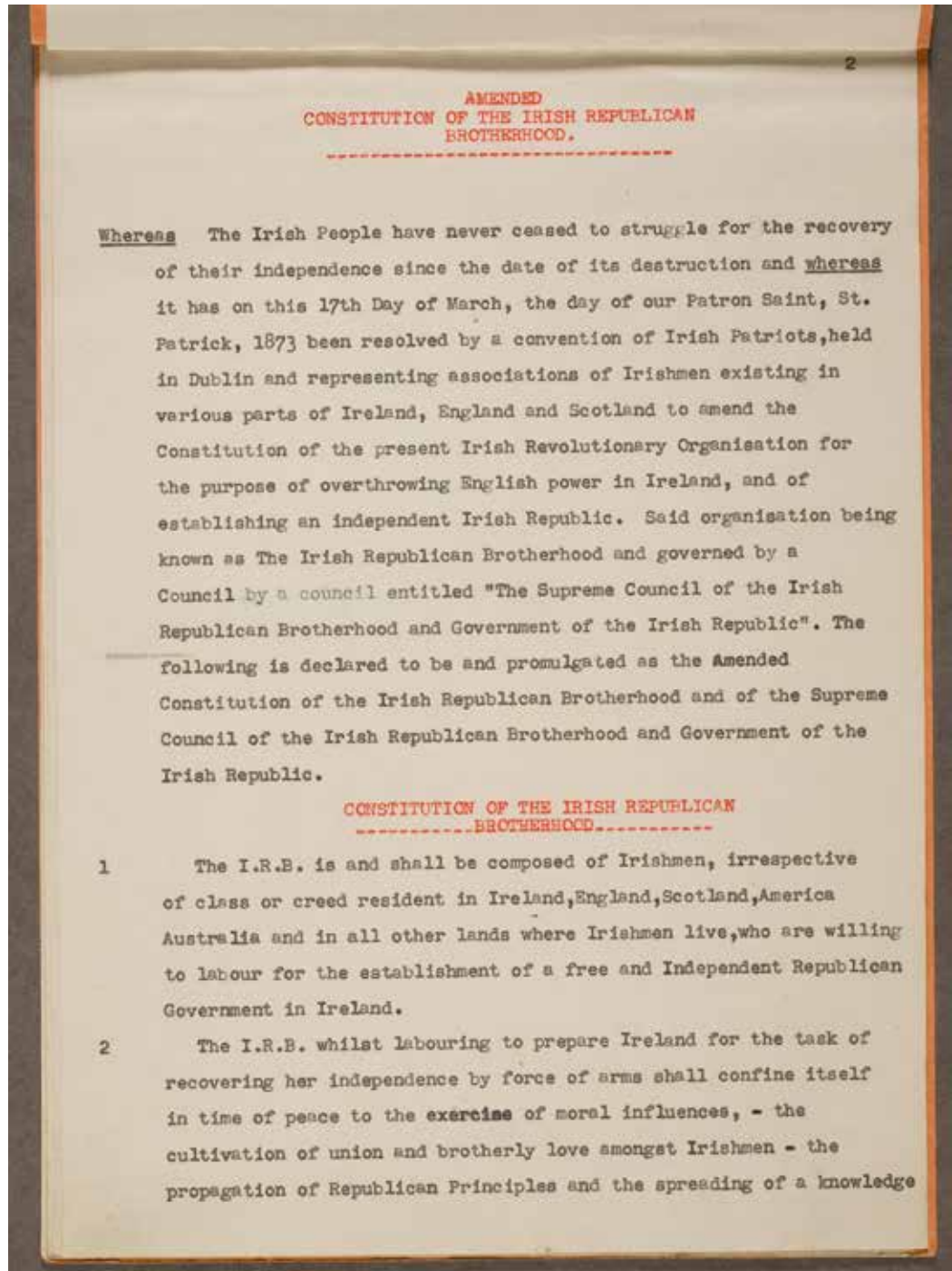
## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

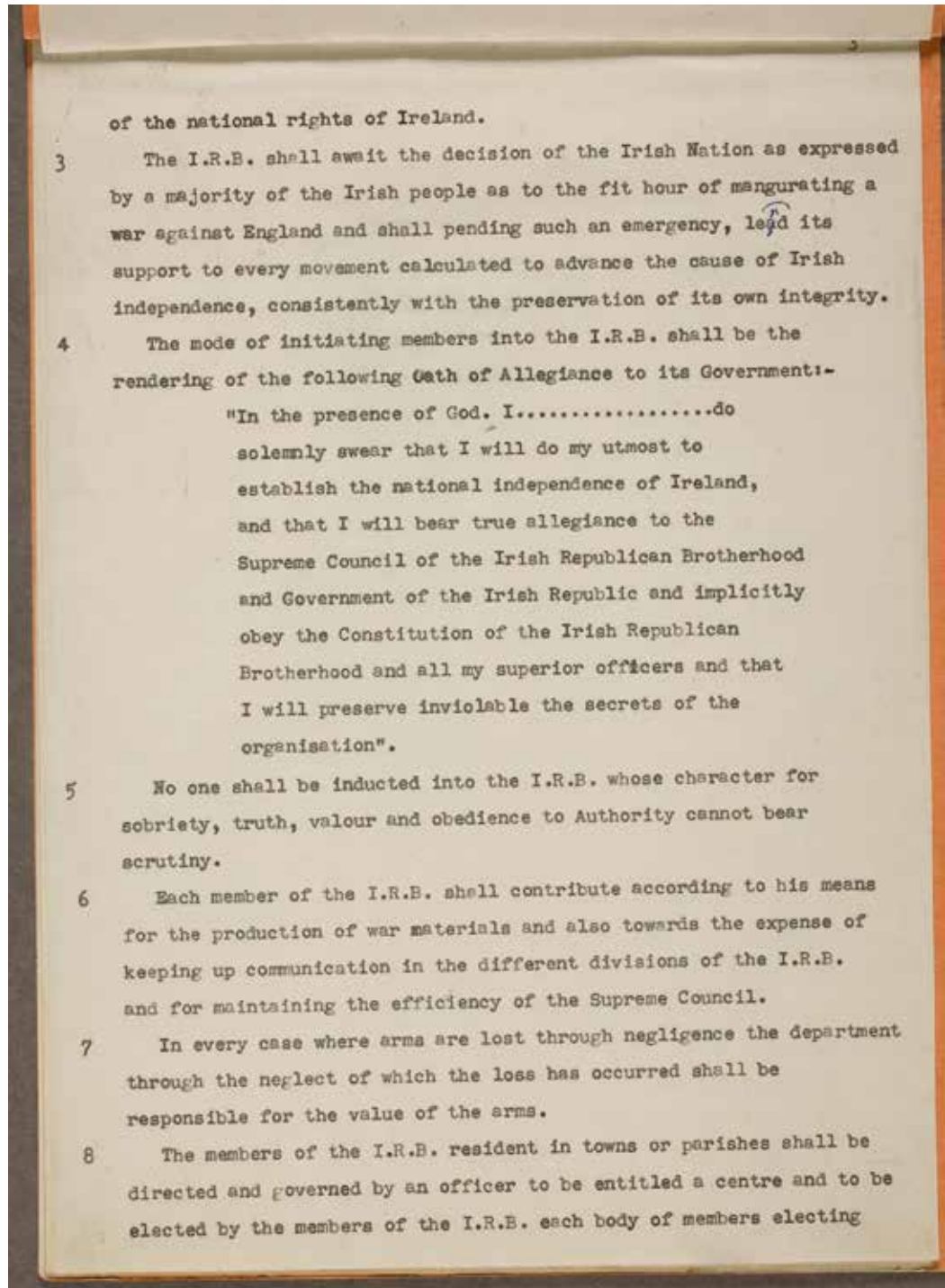


3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



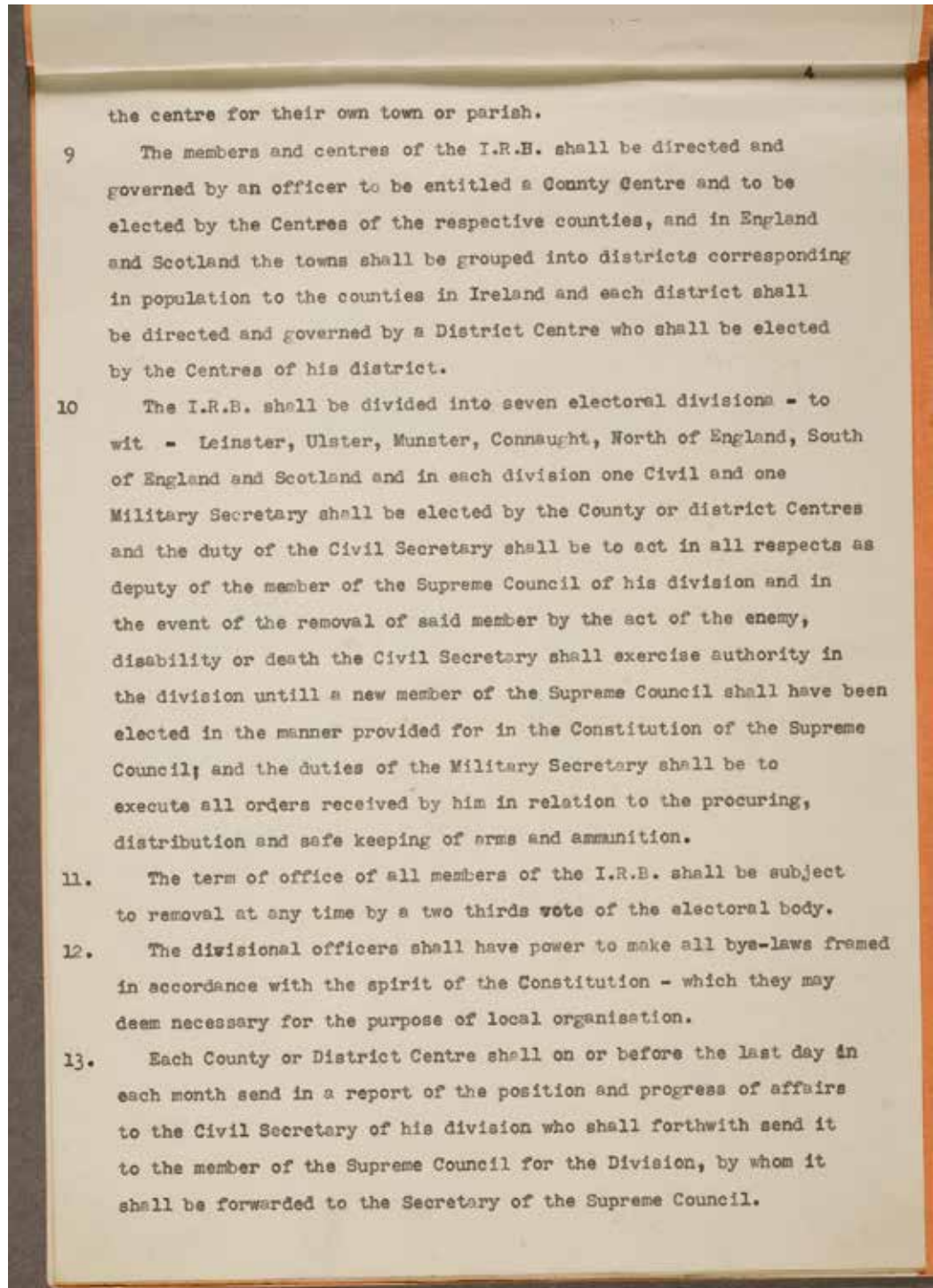
The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



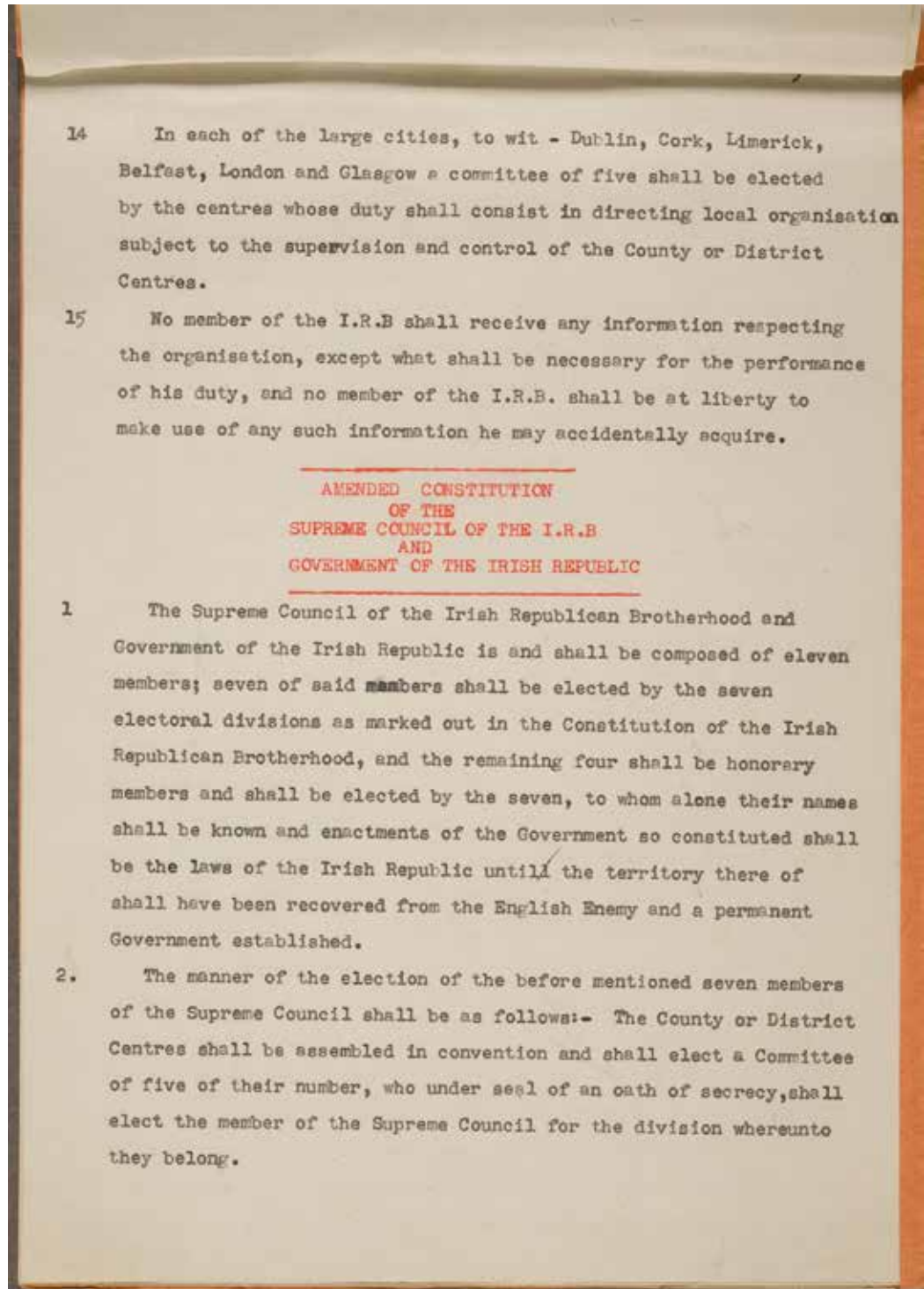
The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

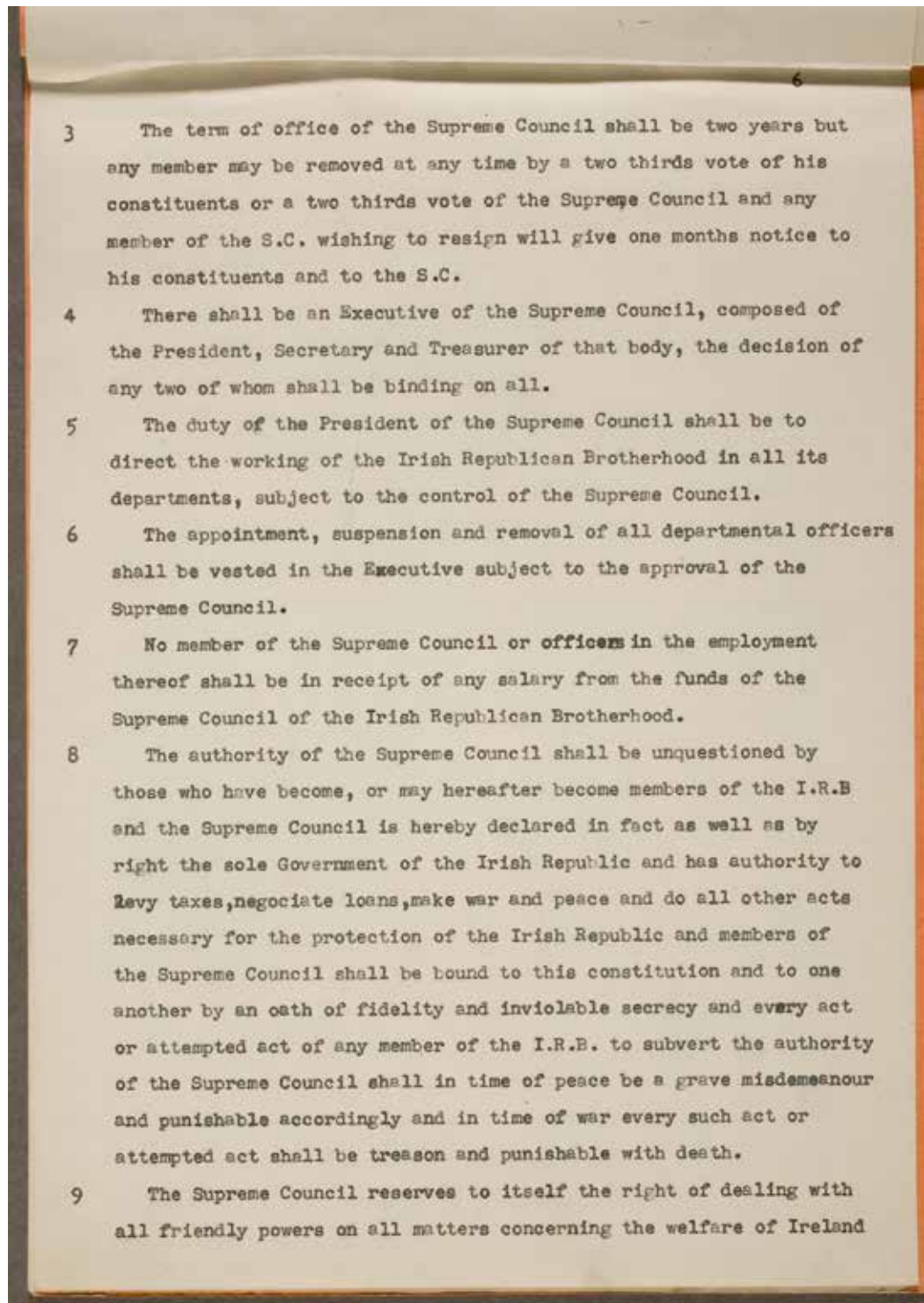
3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

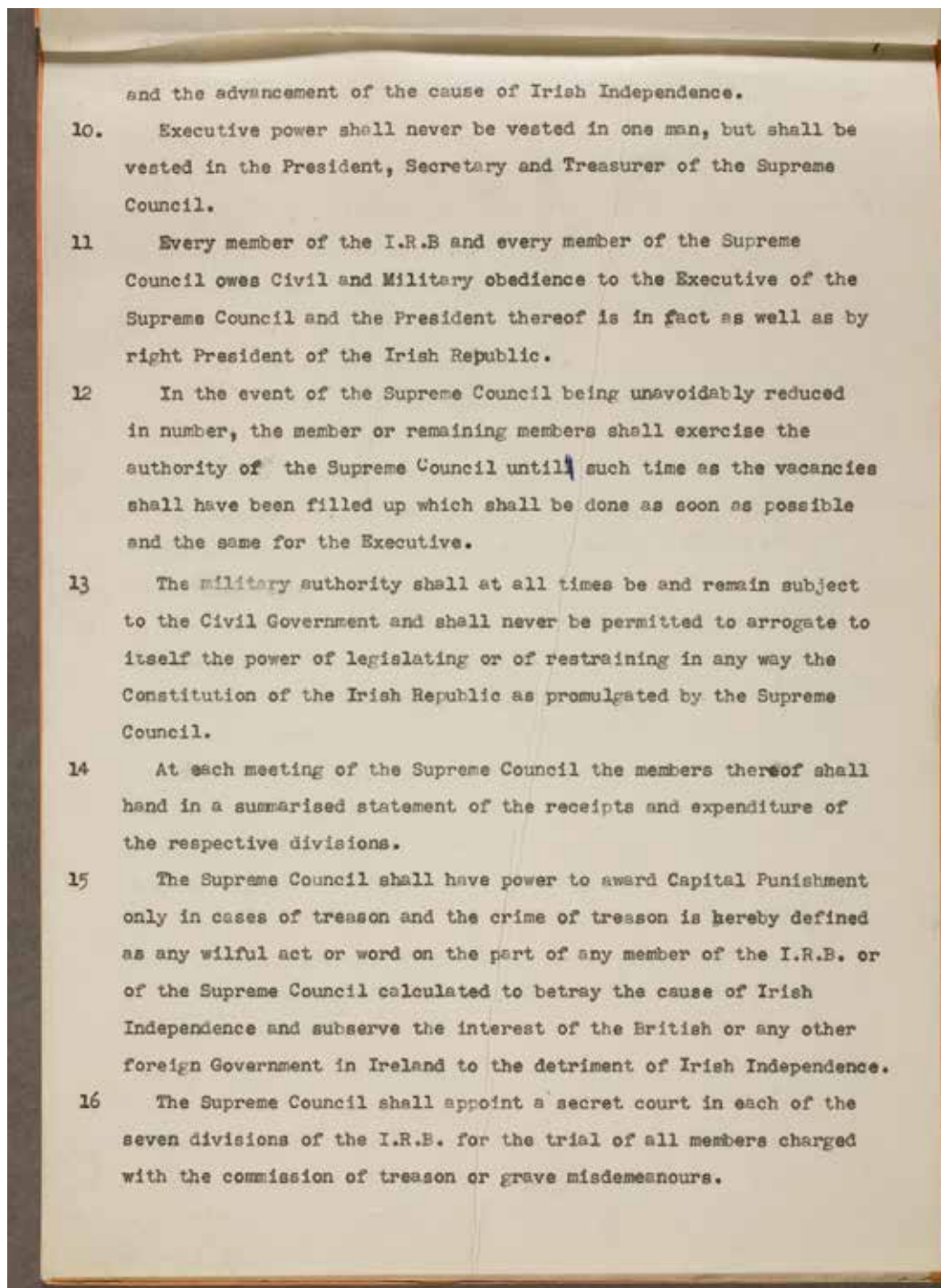


3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



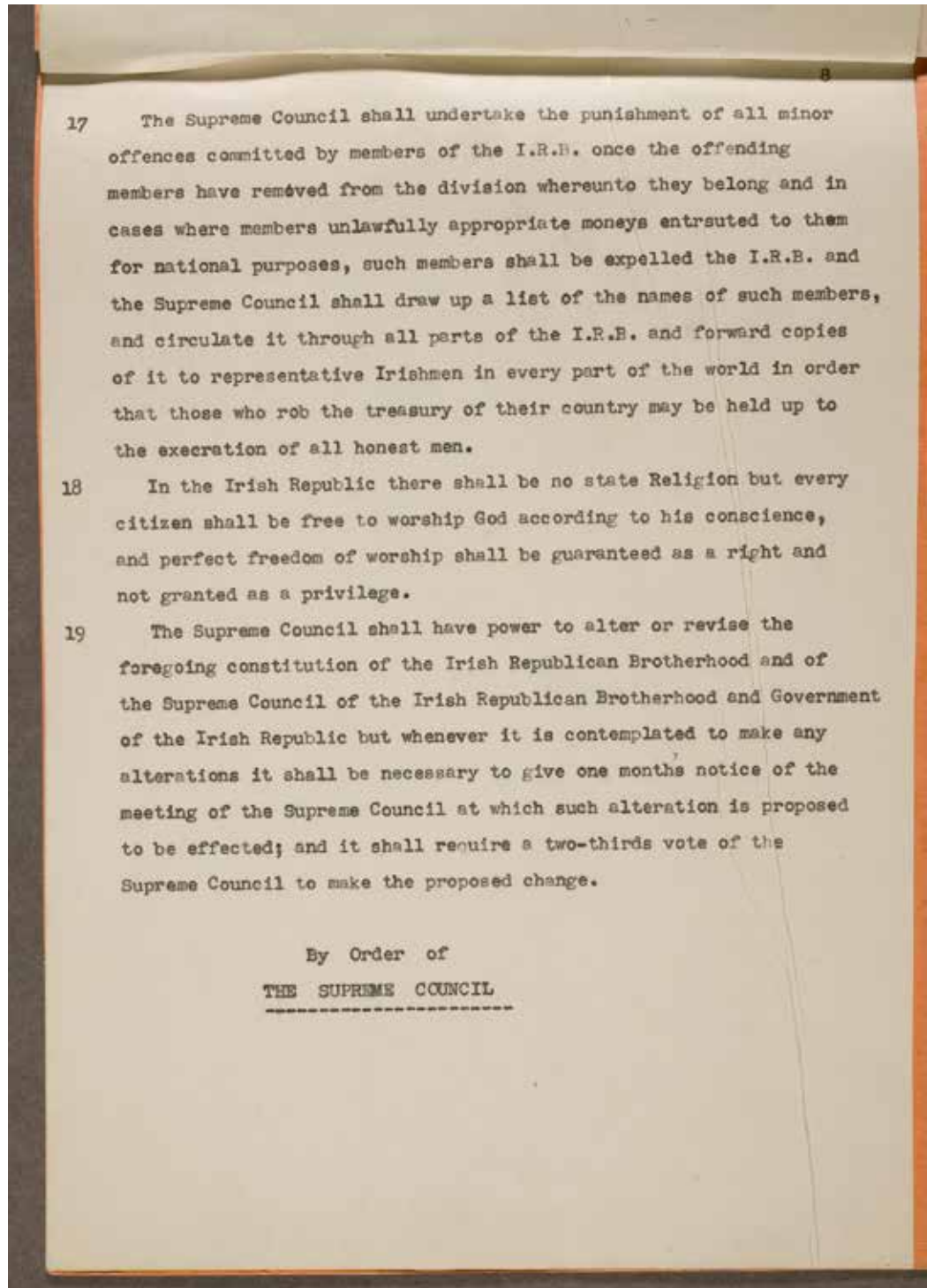
The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



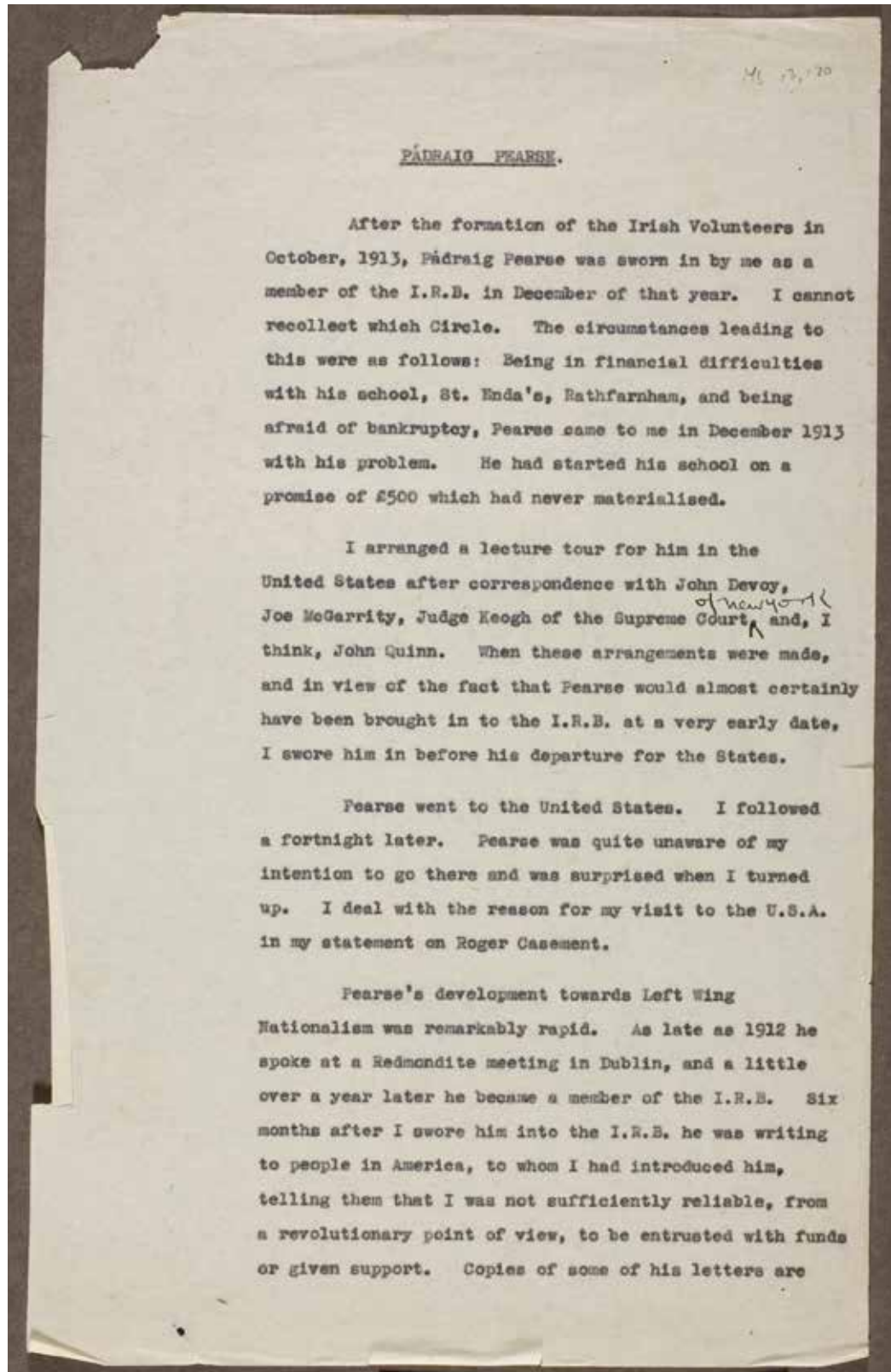
The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



The constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood as it was at the time of the 1916 Rising. (Ms. 13,163, Hobson Papers).

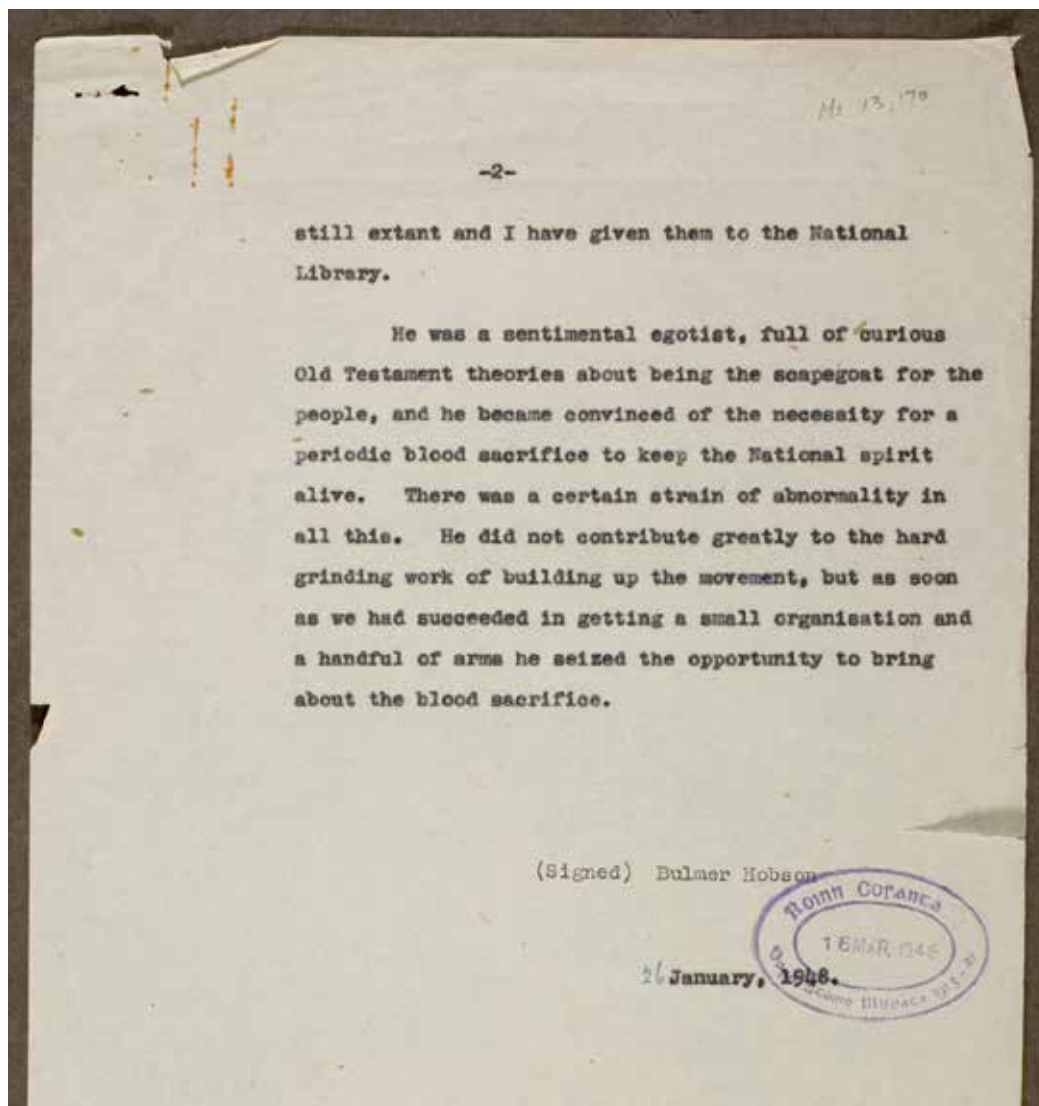
## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



Statement by Bulmer Hobson on Patrick Pearse given to the Bureau of Military History, 26 Jan. 1938.



## 3.2.1 Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough



Statement by Bulmer Hobson on Patrick Pearse given to the Bureau of Military History, 26 Jan. 1938.