



- 3.0 **Iad Siúd a raibh tionchar acu ar an Éirí Amach: Réamhrá**
- 3.1 **Iad siúd a bhí bainteach leis an Rialtas Dúchais (ar a shon agus ina choinne)**
- 3.1.2 **Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916**

Bhí baint ag Birrell leis an Éirí Amach go hindíreach toisc nár thug sé, mar aon le Asquith, aghaidh ar Aontachtaithe Uladh agus nach ndeachaigh sé i ngleic leis na Poblachtánaigh a raibh an tÉirí Amach á phleanáil acu. Ba as Learpholl do Augustine Birrell (1850-1933). Ba mhinistir Baisteach a athair agus ba mhinistir de chuid Shaor-Eaglais na hAlban a sheanathair, ar thaobh a máthar; d'éirigh sé ina agnóisí ní ba dhéanaí ina shaol ach chloígh sé lena dhearcadh neamhaontach Liobrálach. Tugadh deis dó staidéar a dhéanamh ar an dlí in Trinity Hall, Cambridge a bhí le oidhreacht a fuair sé. Chleachtaigh sé mar abhcóide ina dhiaidh sin agus bhain sé cáil amach dó féin mar scríbhneoir aistí agus mar chriticeoir liteartha. Toghadh ina Theachta Parlaiminte Liobrálach do Fife sa bhliain 1889 agus bhí sé ina Aire faoi Campbell-Bannerman. Rinneadh Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann de in 1907; post a bhí aige go dtí mí na Bealtaine 1916 nuair a d'éirigh sé as faoi scáth iarmhairt an tÉirí Amach.

Ba é an Príomh-Rúnaí an té a bhí freagrach as beartas rialtais a cheapadh agus a riaradh in Éirinn. Bhí Birrell ar cheann de na hAirí ba thiomanta, ba dhaonna agus ba thairgiúla dá raibh riamh sa phost. Bhí sé an-bháúil d'Éirinn náisiúnach, ba é an Rialtas Dúchais an cuspóir ba mhó a bhí aige. Idir an dá linn, d'achtaigh sé 56 phíosa reachtaíochta a raibh dea-thionchar acu ar Éirinn don chuid ba mhó. Áiríodh leo, bunú Ollscoil na hÉireann agus Ollscoil na Banríona, Béal Feirste agus an tAcht Talún, 1909, acht a chuir borradh faoi cheannach talún ag tionóntaí agus a laghdaigh achrann

## 3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916

talúntais. Is cinnte go raibh ról suntasach ag Birrell maidir le hachtú an Bhille Rialtas Dúchais ar deireadh. Bhí sé ciontach, áfach, as ligean d'Aontachtaithe Uladh cruth an Bhille Rialtas Dúchais a athrú sa mhéid nár thaitin sé le formhór na náisiúnaithe toisc gur áiríodh foráil i dtaobh críochdheighilte. Bhí sé freagrach sa mhéid gur theip air Óglaigh Uladh a choimeád faoi smacht agus rinne sé failí chomh maith ligean do na hoifigigh airm cheannairceacha agus iad siúd a bhí freagrach as tabhairt i dtír na ngunnaí i Latharna cead a gcinn a bheith acu. Ag an am, rinne na náisiúnaithe comparáid idir an chaoi go raibh an chuma ar an scéal go ndearnadh neamhaird de seo agus an seasamh a ghlac na húdaráis maidir le Jim Larkin agus na ceardchumannaithe in 1913 agus scaoileadh sibhialtach in 1914 i ndiaidh thabhairt i dtír na ngunnaí i mBinn Éadair in 1914.

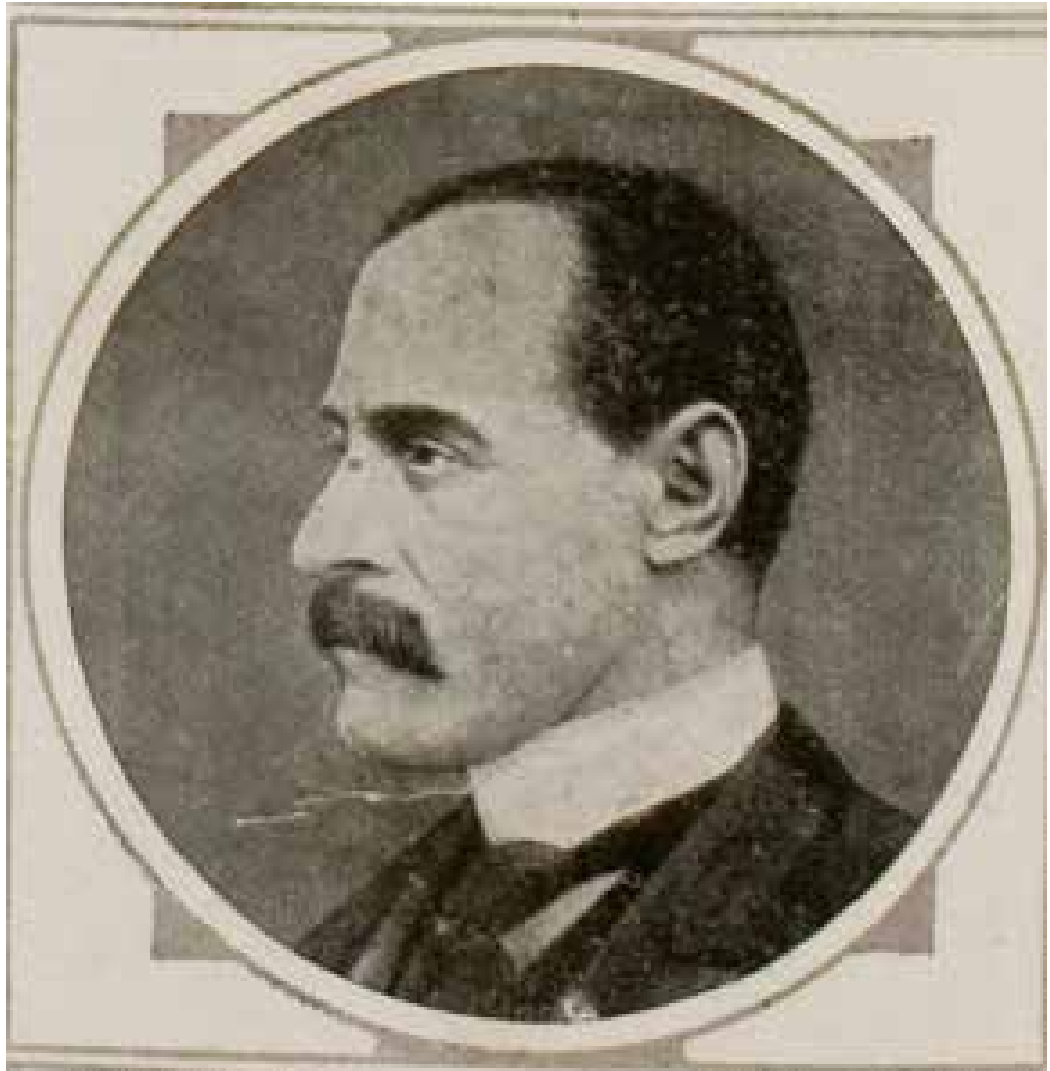
Maidir le hÉirí Amach 1916, níor thuig Birrell i gceart an baol a bhain le faicsean na láimhe láidre laistigh den náisiúnachas; mheas sé nach raibh an líon acu ard go leor agus nach raibh bagairt ar bith ann. Thug sé neamhaird ar an seans go n-éireodh siad amach in ainneoin go raibh sé soiléir nach n-éireodh leo ach go mbeadh siad ina mairtíorgh ar son shaoirse na hÉireann chun fonn suanach an neamhspleáchais náisiúnta a mhúscailt. Faoi dheireadh, níor thuig sé go mbeadh na básuithe frithtorthúil, go spreagfadh siad freagairt ón bpobal a mbeadh neamhspleáchas na hÉireann mar thoradh air sa deireadh. Ar éirí as dó i mí na Bealtaine 1916, ghlac Birrell leis an milleán as ligean d'ullmhúcháin don Éirí Amach dul ar aghaidh gan srian. Cé gurbh é Asquith cuid mhaith, agus an rialtas ina iomláine, faoi deara easpa gníomhaíochta Birrell i leith aontachtaithe Uladh, leag an coimisiún oifigiúil an milleán is mó as an Éirí Amach ar Birrell ó ba é a shainchúram siúd é mar Aire.

## 3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



The Right Honourable Augustine Birrell MP, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the period 1907-16. The Chief Secretary normally spent much of his time in parliament in Westminster, leaving routine administration to the Under-Secretary. Birrell was in England when the Rising took place. (Illustrated London News, 6 May 1916).

3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



Lieut. Col. Sir Matthew Nathan, Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was the chief permanent official of the government in Ireland in the period Sept. 1914 to May 1916. He was aware of Roger Casement's attempt to procure German arms; when he learned that the German ship bearing the arms had been scuttled he knew that a successful Rising could not succeed and felt that the crisis had passed. He does not seem to have considered the possibility that the Rising could still take place regardless of the virtual certainty of failure. (Illustrated London News, 6 May 1916).

## 3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



Ivor Churchill Guest, 1st Viscount Wimborne, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland since 1915. The day before the Rising Wimborne was alarmed but Nathan tried to allay his fears, arguing that there was no immediate danger. (*Illustrated London News*, 6 May 1916).

## 3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



Photograph

"Sport & General."

LORD WIMBORNE, WHO TOOK THE OATH AS LORD LIEUTENANT LAST FRIDAY, INSPECTS THE GUARD OF HONOUR IN THE CASTLE YARD.

Lord Wimborne inspecting a guard of honour at Dublin Castle following his arrival as Lord Lieutenant (New York Times, Magazine Section, 30 April 1916).

3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



General Sir Lovick Bransby Friend, commander of the forces in Ireland. He was on leave in England when the Rising occurred. (Weekly Irish Times, Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook, 1917).

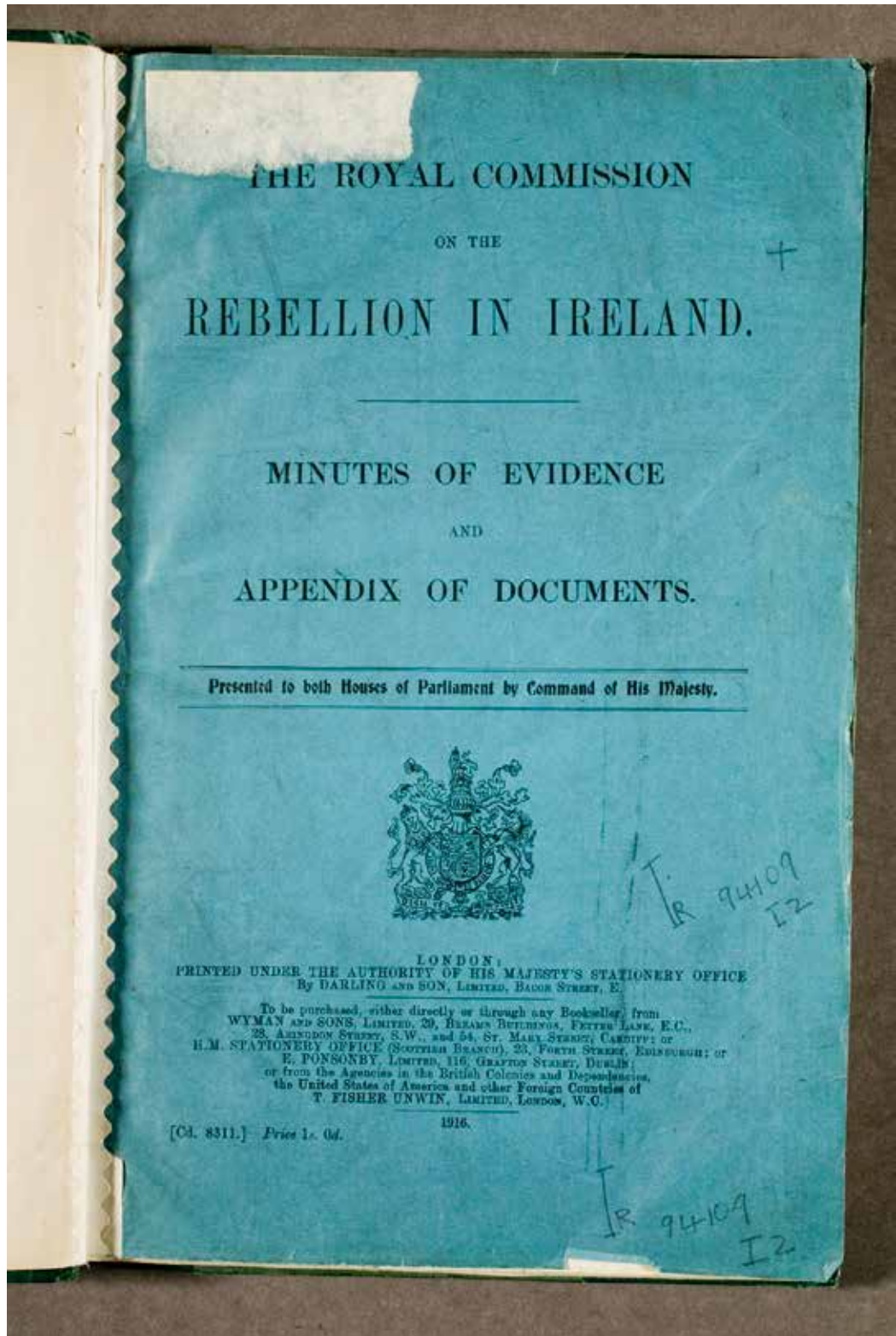
3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



General A.E. Sandbach, Commander of troops in the Dublin area. (Weekly Irish Times, Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook, 1917).

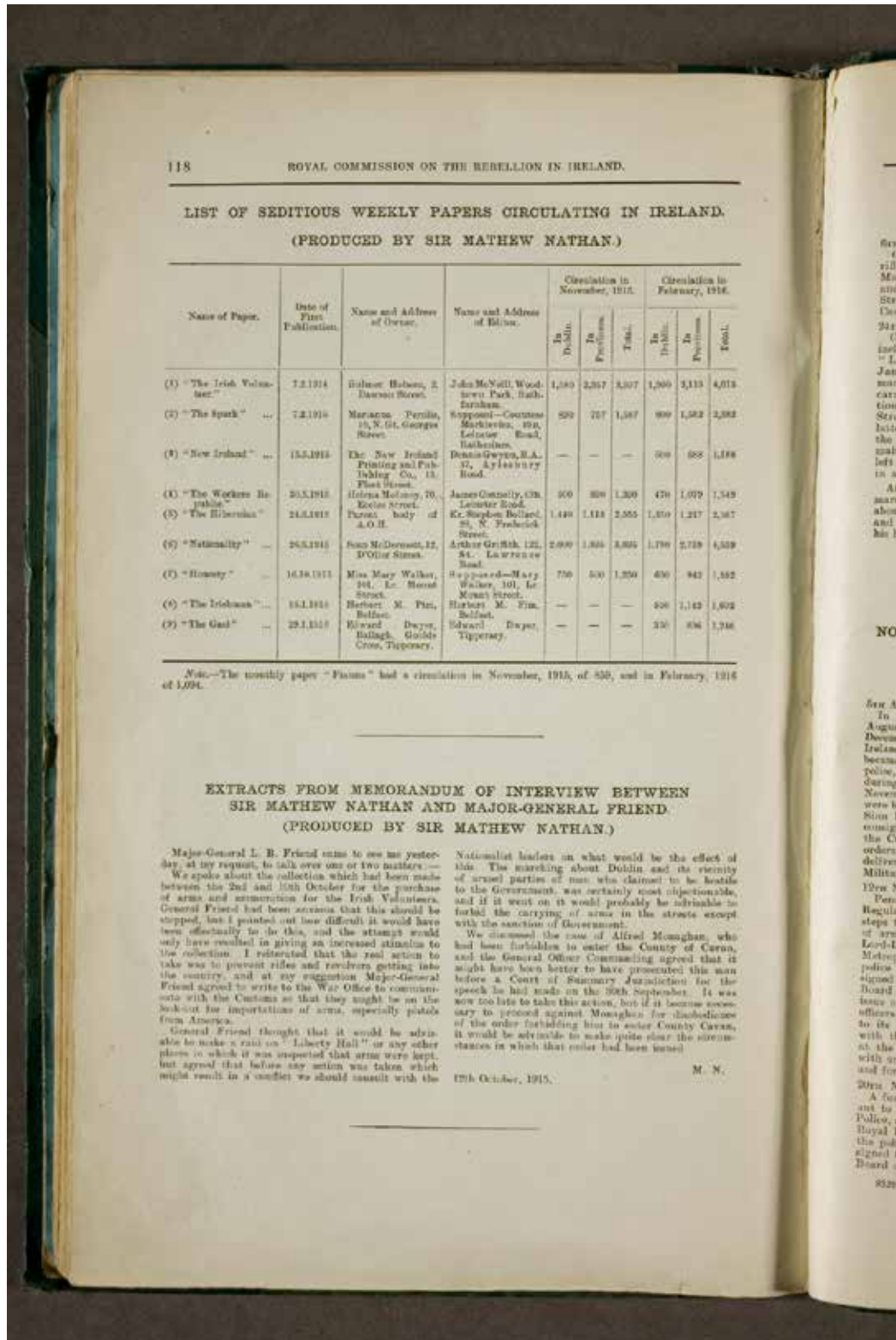


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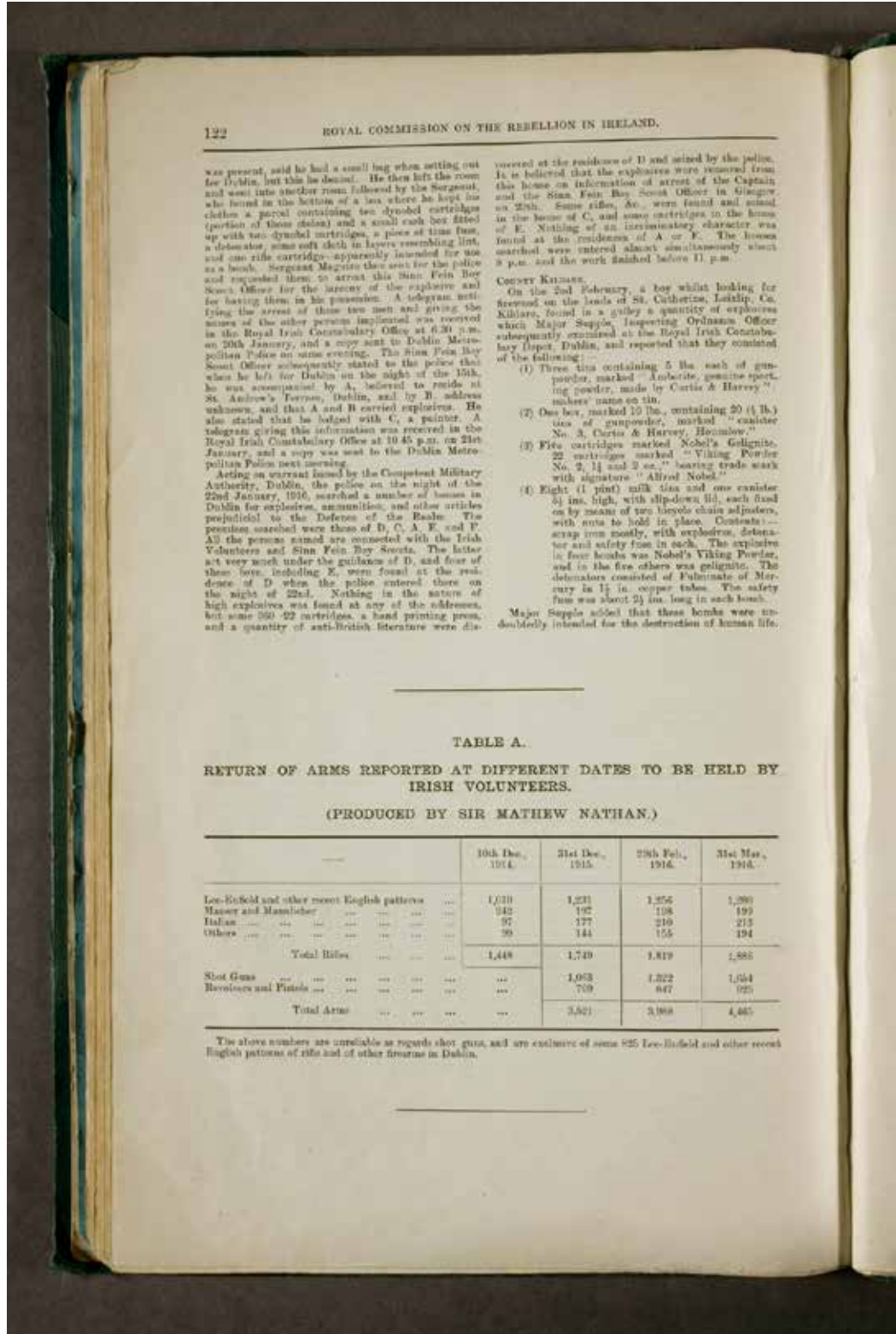
Pages from the minutes of evidence of the Royal Commission on the 1916 Rising. They illustrate aspects of the Dublin administration under Birrell and Nathan.

3.1.2 Augustine Birrell, Príomh-Rúnaí na hÉireann, 1907-1916



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was present, said he had a small bag when getting out for Dublin, but this he denied. He then left the room and went into another room, followed by the Sergeant, who found in the bottom of a box where he kept his clothes a parcel containing ten dynamite cartridges (portion of those stolen) and a small cash box filled up with two dynamite cartridges, a piece of time fuse, a detonator, some soft cloth in layers resembling lint, and one rifle cartridge, apparently intended for use as a bomb. Sergeant Maguire then sent for the police and requested them to arrest this Sinn Féin Boy Scout Officer for the larceny of the explosive and for having them in his possession. A telegram notifying the arrest of these two men and giving the names of the other persons implicated was received in the Royal Irish Constabulary Office at 6.30 p.m. on 20th January, and a copy sent to Dublin Metropolitan Police on same evening. The Sinn Féin boy when he left for Dublin on the night of the 19th, he was accompanied by A, believed to reside at St. Andrew's Terrace, Dublin, and by B, address unknown, and that A and B carried explosives. He also stated that he lodged with C, a painter. A telegram giving this information was received in the Royal Irish Constabulary Office at 10.45 p.m. on 21st January, and a copy was sent to the Dublin Metropolitan Police next morning.

Acting on warrant issued by the Commanded Military Authority, Dublin, the police on the night of the 22nd January, 1916, searched a number of houses in Dublin for explosives, ammunition, and other articles prejudicial to the Defence of the Realm. The houses searched were those of D, C, A, E, and F. All the persons named are connected with the Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin Boy Scouts. The latter act very much under the guidance of D, and four of these boys, including E, were found at the residence of D when the police entered there on the night of 22nd. Nothing in the nature of high explosives was found at any of the addresses, but some 500-52 cartridges, a hand printing press, and a quantity of anti-British literature were discovered at the residence of D and seized by the police. It is believed that the explosives were removed from this house on information of arrest of the Captain and the Sinn Féin Boy Scout Officer in Glasgow on 23rd. Some rifles, No. 1, were found and seized in the house of C, and some cartridges in the house of E. Nothing of an incendiary character was found at the residence of A or F. The houses searched were entered almost simultaneously about 8 p.m. and the work finished before 11 p.m.

On the 2nd February, a boy whilst looking for freestone on the lands of St. Catherine, Lixnapp, Co. Kildare, found in a gully a quantity of explosives which Major Suggie, Inspecting Ordnance Officer subsequently examined at the Royal Irish Constabulary Depot, Dublin, and reported that they consisted of the following:

- (1) Three tin containing 5 lbs. each of gunpowder, marked "Amberite, genuine rocketing powder, made by Curtis & Harvey" (makers name on tin).
- (2) One box, marked 15 lbs., containing 20 (4 lbs.) tin of "gunpowder", marked "candler No. 3, Curtis & Harvey, Hounslow."
- (3) Five cartridges marked "Nobel's Gelignite, 22 cartridges marked "Viking Powder No. 2, 14 and 2 oz." bearing trade mark with signature "Alfred Nobel, Hounslow."
- (4) Eight (4 pint) milk tins and one canister 5 1/2 ins. high, with all-down lid, each fixed on by means of two bicycle chain adjusters, with nuts to hold in place. Contents:—scrap iron mostly, with explosive, detonator and safety fuse in each. The explosive in four bombs was Nobel's Viking Powder, and in the five others was gelignite. The detonators consisted of Fulminate of Mercury in 1 1/2 in. copper tubes. The safety fuse was about 2 1/2 ins. long in each bomb.

Major Suggie added that these bombs were undoubtedly intended for the destruction of human life.

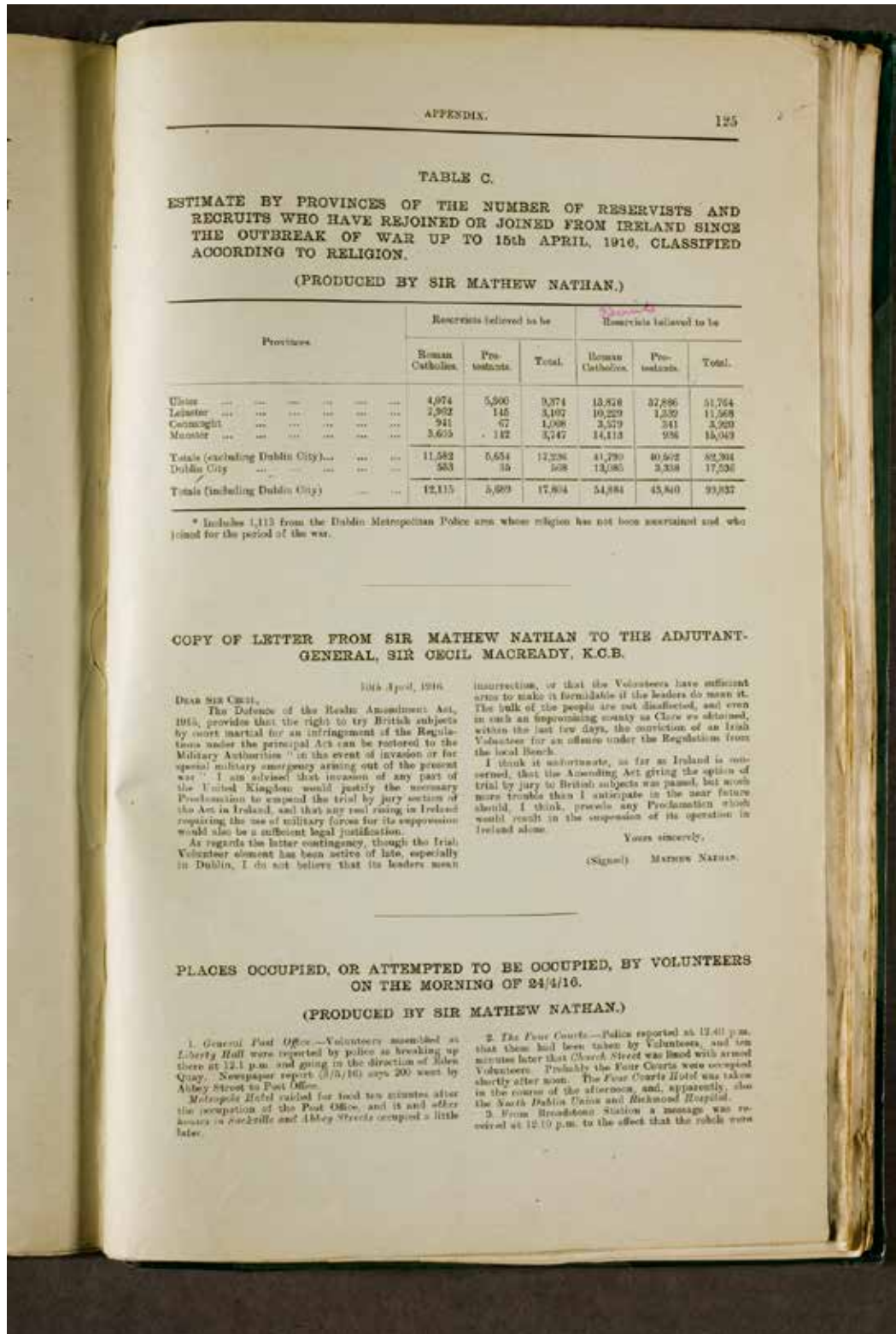
TABLE A.  
RETURN OF ARMS REPORTED AT DIFFERENT DATES TO BE HELD BY IRISH VOLUNTEERS.  
(PRODUCED BY SIR MATHEW NATHAN.)

	10th Dec., 1914.	31st Dec., 1915.	28th Feb., 1916.	31st Mar., 1916.
Lee-Enfield and other recent English pattern	1,010	1,231	1,254	1,280
Mosses and Mannlicher	342	192	108	199
Italian	97	177	210	213
Others	39	144	155	194
Total Rifles	1,488	1,744	1,819	1,886
Shot Guns	...	1,053	1,022	1,054
Revolvers and Pistols	...	709	647	625
Total Arms	...	3,511	3,488	3,565

The above numbers are unreliable as regards shot guns, and are exclusive of some 825 Lee-Enfield and other recent English pattern rifles and of other firearms in Dublin.

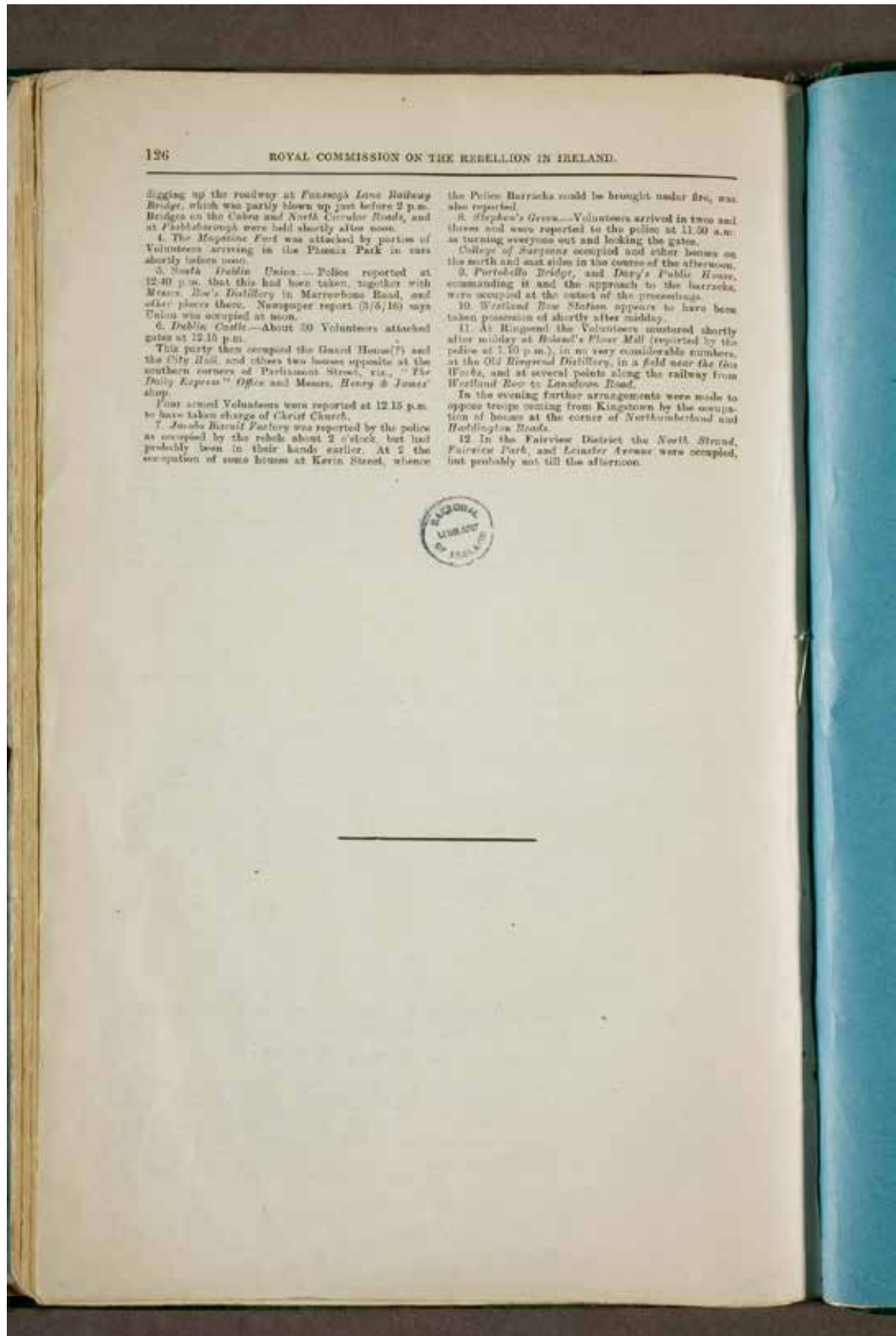
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