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Answers given by Mr J. Gibbons, Minister for Agriculture, to questions put to him by Chief Supt. Fleming at the Minister's Office on Friday, 22nd., May, 1970.

- Question No. 1. You said in your statement of the 18th., inst. that you met Capt. Kelly at Mr Blaney's request. Did Mr Blaney discuss the question of Capt. Kelly's proposed resignation with you at that time, or did he mention anything concerning the importation of arms, in which Kelly was involved?
- Answer. As far as I can recall Mr Blaney did not discuss Capt. Kelly's resignation with me at that time, nor did he mention anything then about the importation of arms.
- Question No. 2. You said in your statement of the 18th., May that you "suspected Kelly strongly". Can you state what you suspected him of, and what grounds you had for those suspicions?
- Answer. I suspected Kelly of over-involvement with groups in the ghettos in the six-counties. Col. Hefferon told me in a very oblique way that he himself had anxieties of this kind. Col. Hefferon said that those groups were not identified with any form of the I.R.A.
- Question No. 3. You said in the same statement that you also suspected Charles Haughey and Neil Blaney. Can you state what you suspected them of, and on what grounds?
- Answer. Mr Haughey's and Mr Blaney's names had been cropping up in reports made to me by Col. Hefferon since the previous August. These reports were mainly verbal.
- Question No. 4. Did either Mr Haughey or Mr Blaney ever discuss the importation of arms or ammunition with you, and in what context?
- Answer. In one conversation which I had with Mr Blaney in the dining room of Leinster House early in April, 1970 he spoke about gun-running and we discussed the matter. Although he spoke somewhat obliquely I clearly understood that what he was conveying was whether I knew that the Minister for Defence could authorise the Customs free importation of arms irregularly. I told him that I wouldn't consider doing this under any circumstances. He then said "You wouldn't", and I said "No". That finished the conversation. Sometime early in April I asked Mr Haughey if he knew anything about a gun project, and he said "No, I feel the same about this as you do, and any action to be taken must be taken by the Government collectively".
- Question No. 5. When did you first meet Capt. James Kelly? Who introduced you to him?
- Answer. I first met Capt. James Kelly towards the end of March, 1970. I think it was in my own office in the Dept. of Defence. It was either himself or Mr Blaney who asked for the appointment. The reason for his coming to see me was that he said he was considering leaving the Army. He did not mention anything about the importation of guns at this stage, or his involvement with Mr Haughey or Mr Blaney.

(Over)

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Question No. 6. You said that on the 23rd., April, 1970 you met Mr Blaney in his Office at his request, and that Col. Hefferon and Capt. Kelly were present. Did it not appear odd to you that Col Hefferon who was retired from the Army at that time should be present? What did Blaney say about the importation of arms, and what did Col. Hefferon say?

Answer. I did think it odd at the time and I was somewhat surprised to see Col. Hefferon present. Col. Hefferon always ^{spoke} highly of Capt. Kelly and I assumed he was there as a friend and colleague of his.

Blaney did most of the talking at this meeting and he said that the operation of importing guns through Dublin Airport had been halted, because of the breakdown in the arrangements, about which we all knew at that time. This meeting did not surprise me at all as my suspicions had been growing all the time that there was a project on foot to import arms. Blaney stated that since there were no guns imported nothing could be proved against them. I cannot recall if Col. Hefferon said anything at the meeting but I got the impression that he was au fait with the current position.

Question No. 7. Did it not appear odd to you that the Minister for Agriculture - Mr Blaney should be so interested in illegal gun-running?

Answer. Not in the least. Having regard to Mr Blaney's public statements and general attitude to Northern politics.

Question No. 8. What member of the Dept. of Justice told you that Kelly was under surveillance, and when were you told?

Answer. The Minister for Justice - Mr O'Morain had mentioned to me that Kelly was under surveillance. This would be sometime in March.

Question No. 9. When did you first become aware that the Army authorities were dis-satisfied with Capt. Kelly?

Answer. The first intimation I got of this was when Col. Delaney and Col. Hefferon called to my office on the occasion of Col. Delaney taking up as Director of Intelligence. Col. Delaney stated quite flatly that he would select his own staff. This implied the displacement of Capt. Kelly.

Question No. 10. Did you not think it strange that Capt. Kelly was going direct to the Dept. of Finance for cash, instead of to your Dept. or to his superiors?

Answer. I had no knowledge of Capt. Kelly having gone to the Dept. of Finance for funds.

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- Question No. 11. Did Col. Hefferon mention to you that he was interested in having a Transmitting Station in the Border area ?
- Answer. The Chief of Staff was always pressing for better equipment, including Radio equipment, but I don't recall Col. Hefferon mentioning it.
- Question No. 12. Did Col. Hefferon mention anything to you about the Civil Rights Office in Monaghan ?
- Answer. It was mentioned as a suitable place where an Intelligence Officer could work and have more contact with people from both sides of the Border.
- Question No. 13. Did Col. Hefferon or Capt. Kelly tell you that a large sum of money for the upkeep of this Office was paid to them by the Minister for Finance.
- Answer. I don't recall having been told about any sum of money having been paid by the Minister for Finance.
- Question No. 14. Were you aware of the purposes for which "The Grant in Aid Fund" for the North was established ?
- Answer. Apart from knowing that this fund existed I had no further knowledge of it.
- Question No. 15. Were you aware of a fund in the bank in Clones in the names of Devlin, Kennedy and Rearty ?
- Answer. No.
- Question No. 16. When did you first meet John Kelly ?
- Answer. I met John Kelly first as a member of a deputation from the North who came to Dublin early in 1970, and again on the 5th., March, 1970. I never met John Kelly on his own.
- Question No. 17. Was Seamus Brady ever present at any of the meetings you attended ?
- Answer. No.
- Question No. 18. Did you ever meet Mr Albert LUYKX, or how long have you known him ?
- Answer. I never heard of Albert Luykx until Friday 24th., April, when his name was mentioned by Chief Supt. Fleming.

Signed : James Gibbons.

Witness : John P. Fleming. Ch/Supt.

Dated this 22nd., day of May, 1970.