

PMA W.
B.R.C.
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It would be understating matters to say that the recent disorders, and their tragic consequences, have shocked and dismayed the country. Over recent months we have become all too accustomed to violence and disorder, but the intensity of the disturbances in Belfast and Londonderry created a situation on quite a new level of gravity.

Before we can seek to free our community from the aftermath of these events, we must try to determine precisely what took place. Who began this violence? Who introduced the use of firearms into an already grave situation? What parties then became involved? Who was responsible for the extensive damage, the injuries, the loss of life? Public opinion demands an answer to these questions.

It is all the more vital to seek such answers because we have already heard so many hasty, premature and ill-judged pronouncements by people who cannot possibly have had all the facts available to them.

This is why we decided - as was announced last week - that an Inquiry must be held at the highest possible level and in the most impartial way. Accordingly it is proposed to establish a Tribunal of Inquiry, to inquire into the acts of violence and the civil disturbances as set out in the Motion on the Order Paper.

/In the event of this Resolution

In the event of this Resolution receiving the approbation of the House, and a similar Resolution being approved in another place, it would be the intention of the Government to recommend for appointment as Chairman of the Tribunal the Hon. Mr. Justice Scarman. Sir Leslie Scarman was appointed as a Judge of the English High Court in 1961 and since 1965 has served as Chairman of the Law Commission. My colleagues and I are most grateful not only to Sir Leslie, who has intimated his willingness to serve, but also to the Lord Chancellor who has readily agreed to release him for this most important task. There would be two other members of the Tribunal, drawn from Northern Ireland, of whom one would be a Protestant and one a Roman Catholic. We would propose that these should be Mr. William Marshall, a businessman who was called to the English Bar and Mr. George K. G. Lavery, a businessman qualified as a solicitor. These gentlemen also have intimated their willingness to serve, and we are most grateful to them for their readiness to accept this heavy responsibility.

I feel sure that the House will accept our proposal to appoint a Tribunal so constituted, under the chairmanship of one of the most distinguished English Judges, as an earnest of our complete determination that this Inquiry shall be conducted in the most searching and impartial way.

/It is our considered view that

It is our considered view that in order to make its Inquiry fully effective, the Tribunal must have powers equivalent to those of the High Court, including the power to compel the attendance of witnesses. I feel sure that all well-disposed citizens would in any case wish to co-operate fully with an Inquiry of this sort, but in the last resort we feel it necessary to ensure that no person will be in a position to avoid that responsibility.

For this reason, we propose to constitute the Tribunal under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act, 1921. That Act provides that such a Tribunal must be set on foot by Resolutions from both Houses of Parliament. If and when both Houses so resolve, the Tribunal can then be constituted without delay, and will be clothed with all the necessary powers.

I commend this Resolution to the House. Let us have the truth, and - as far as humanly possible - the whole truth of those terrible events. It is only by refusing to shrink from the truth that the whole community may face up to its implications.