

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



<b>Reference Code:</b>	2000/6/657
<b>Title:</b>	Note on representations made to the British Government, on behalf of Neil Blaney, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, regarding the escalating violence in Northern Ireland
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	Aug 1969
<b>Level of description:</b>	Item
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	2 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Access Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

NOTE

At about 3.30 a.m. this morning Mr. Blaney, the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, telephoned me at my home. He said that he had been trying, without success, to locate the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste and the Minister for Defence. His purpose in getting in touch with me was that he was seriously perturbed by reports he was receiving from the North about a grave deterioration in the situation, especially in Derry and Dungannon. Mr. McAteer had told him that the police in Derry were still attacking the people in Bogside. A new development was an attack on the Cathedral by the police and Paisleyites. Shots had been fired and two or three people had been shot. He did not know how seriously. It was clear from this that the British Government had taken no action on the request conveyed to them to stop the police from attacking the people of Derry. Mr. Blaney's information about Dungannon was that the B Specials were out in force and some of them were armed with Sten guns. The situation there looked very ugly also.

Mr. Blaney indicated that in this desperate situation he thought that I should endeavour to contact the British urging them to take action on the Government's earlier request. I said that the only possibility of making contact at this hour of the morning would be either through the British Ambassador in Dublin or if I could contact Mr. Rush of our London Embassy and ask him to get in touch with the Duty Officer in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. At Mr. Blaney's request I promised to try the latter course. I succeeded in contacting Mr. Rush by telephone and instructed him accordingly. I asked him to telephone me back with the result. I told Mr. Blaney that I had contacted Mr. Rush and that he (Mr. Rush) was endeavouring to get in touch with someone in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. At this point Mr. Blaney said that since speaking to me earlier he had received confirmation from an Army source of the seriousness of the situation in Derry and Dungannon and had received further information about trouble in other centres, including Newry. The situation in Newry was, however, different to the extent that Civil Rights demonstrators seemed to be in possession of almost two-thirds of the town.

Mr. Rush telephoned me back about 4.00 a.m. to say that he had succeeded in contacting the Resident Officer at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and that the latter had promised to convey Mr. Rush's representations to an appropriate senior officer. During this telephone call I informed Mr. Rush of the further information I had received from Mr. Blaney. I asked Mr. Rush to let me know of any further developments.

At about 4.15 a.m. Mr. Rush telephoned me again to say that the Resident Officer at the FCO had telephoned him back reporting the result of his conversation with the senior officer he had contacted. The reply was to refer Mr. Rush to a public statement which had been made at about 1.00 a.m. by the British which, in essence, repeated the Government line that there would be no departure from pledges that Northern Ireland should not cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. Mr. Rush, quite rightly, pointed out to the Resident Officer that

- 2 -

the essence of his representations was not about this but his request earlier in the afternoon that the British Government should arrange for the immediate cessation of police attacks on the people of Derry. The Resident Officer seemed reluctant to go back to the Senior Officer, whom he had already dragged out of his bed, but Mr. Rush urged on him the importance we attached to action on our representations in the light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the North.

*Amble*

14 Lúnasa 1969

Mr. Rush telephoned me at 10.30 a.m. to say that he had had a conversation this morning with a Mr. Lush of the FCO who was apparently the senior officer referred to above (he is not a very senior official on the Irish desk). The Resident Officer or "Resident Clerk" as he is officially known was a Mr. Goldsmith.

Mr. Rush learned from Mr. Lush that, following the former's final conversation with Mr. Goldsmith earlier this morning, Mr. Goldsmith acted on his request and went back to Mr. Lush. Mr. Lush, in turn, contacted the Home Office at about 5.30 a.m. who, in turn, contacted the Stormont authorities in Belfast. The latter pleaded that they were already doing all they could to control their own police. They were already pushed to the limit with this and could do little more.

In the same conversation with Mr. Lush, Mr. Rush learned that action was also taken promptly on his representations during his meeting with Lord Chalfont at 5 p.m. yesterday. He said that a report of his representations had been sent to Lord Stone<sup>man</sup> at the Home Office at 5.30 p.m. and that this was in the hands of the Home Secretary by 6.00 p.m. Belfast were contacted immediately.

Finally, Mr. Lush asked Mr. Rush as to what he expected now. Mr. Rush indicated that he would naturally expect a reply to the representations he had made to Lord Chalfont about the police in Derry and also about a UN Peace-keeping Force. Mr. Rush gathered the impression from Mr. Lush that he would probably be called in in the course of the morning to receive a reply on both points. Mr. Rush will keep us informed of any developments.

*Amble*