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31 Lúnasa 1971.

The following statement has today been issued by the Government Information Bureau on behalf of the Department of the Taoiseach:-

During the past two years, the British Army made some 30 incursions into the 26-Counties. These were brought to the attention of the British authorities at the times of occurrence and assurances were received that they were accidental and that stringent instructions had been re-issued to the British troops to avoid such infringements.

At about 1.30 p.m. on Sunday, 29th August, a further infringement occurred when a British patrol consisting of two Ferret armoured scout-cars penetrated about one mile into the 26-Counties. On their return towards the Border they were halted by a motor-van parked across the road. A crowd gathered and impeded their further progress. One scout-car was set on fire and the crew of that car joined the first car which was allowed to return across the Border apparently with one or more punctured tyres.

All this had happened before the arrival of a party of Garda Síochána and an Army patrol. The Superintendent of the Garda Síochána who took charge of the operation was notified at 2.10 p.m. of the incident and he immediately had the O/C. of the Army post at Dundalk notified. The Garda party arrived at the scene at 2.45 p.m. Shortly after the Gardaí arrived they heard gunfire from the direction of the Border. The firing continued for about 10 minutes. Soon afterwards the Army patrol arrived. Following a lull in the firing a helicopter appeared and firing resumed and continued

2.

intermittently for about 25 minutes. Neither Army nor Garda Síochána personnel saw at any time any firing from the 26-Counties into the 6-Counties. Allegations that Army personnel allowed such firing to take place without intervention by them are entirely without foundation.

Although five spent bullet-cases were found a few yards inside the 26-Counties, the Army Authorities are satisfied, on the basis of an examination on the ground yesterday and enquiries carried out by them in association with the Garda Síochána, that the evidence points to the conclusion that the British soldiers were not shot from the 26-County side of the Border. There is, on the other hand, ample evidence that heavy shooting occurred from within the 6-Counties and this and the topographical features of the locality point to the conclusion that it was firing from within the 6-Counties that caused the casualties.

In regard to armed civilians seen on the 26-County side of the Border well after all firing had ceased, these were challenged by an Army patrol which was unable to make their challenge effective because of the crowd who, in the meantime, had collected in the area. Gardaí and Army reinforcements sealed off the area but failed to find trace of the men or their weapons. It is presumed that they re-crossed the Border into Northern Ireland.

This information has been conveyed to the British Authorities together with a strong complaint about their failure to control movements of their troops in border areas which could be prejudicial to the peace.