

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



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OK TTS IT FOR NOW WE WILL HAVE ONE MORE IMMEDIATE IN ABOUT TEN
MINES WE WILL RECALL U +?

21.5.75

c.c. D. Neally

OK ALL THE BEST+78-740
5300G ESTR E1
HIBERNIA LDN
QQQQQQMMMXPEKD



1. Taoiseach 2. Secretary
To me please
HL 21/5/75 2115

SECRET
IMMEDIATE

5300G ESTR E1
A
HIBERNIA LDN
SERIAL NO 182

SECRET CODE

IMMEDIATE

TO HQ

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DONLON

FROM LONDON

FROM AMBASSADOR

SUBJECT: CALL ON SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.

I SAW MR REES AT 11 A.M. HE HAD WITH HIM HIS PRINCIPAL PRIVATE
SECRETARY, DOUGLAS JAMES AND BILL HARDING.

I SPOKE IN THE SENSE OF THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF YOUR C. 220.
HIS FIRST REACTION WAS TO DEPLORE THE WAY IN WHICH THE BELFAST
PRESS AND OUR OWN PAPERS ARE REPORTING THE PROBLEM. SOME
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE FEEDING THE PRESS IN A RATHER
HYSTERICAL MANNER. ONE OF THE PEOPLE HE SEEMED TO HAVE IN MIND
WAS PADDY DEVLIN.

REES THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE COULD NOT CARE LESS WHAT RULES
OF PROCEDURE ARE ADOPTED. WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS WHAT COMES
OUT OF THE CONVENTION AT THE END OF THE DAY. IN THIS CONTEXT
HE CALLED MY ATTENTION TO ARTICLES 2(1) AND (2) OF THE NORTHERN
IRELAND ACT, 1974. REGARDLESS OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE THE REPORT
OR REPORTS TO EMERGE AT THE END OF THE DAY MUST MEET THE REQUIREMENTS
OF SECTION 2. THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION OF MAJORITY AND MINORITY
REPORTS NOR CAN THERE BE ANY QUESTION OF A REPORT WHICH IS ONE-SIDED.
IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT AT THE END OF THE CONVENTION'S SIX MONTH
PERIOD THERE COULD BE A SINGLE INTERIM REPORT. THE CONVENTION
MAY NEED FURTHER TIME TO COMPLETE A FINAL REPORT BUT THIS TOO WILL
HAVE TO BE A SINGLE REPORT TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION
2(1) AND (2). IF EITHER REPORT SHOULD FAIL TO CONFORM TO THESE
REQUIREMENTS THEN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WOULD HAVE TO BE SO
INFORMED IN SPECIFIC TERMS.

COMMUNICATIONS	
Call on	21/5/75 1605
Received on	
Time	
Called on	TA50
Received on	
Signed	DL Byrne

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I CALLED THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S ATTENTION TO THE POWER HE HAS UNDER SECTION 11(2) OF SCHEDULE 2. DOUGLAS JAMES JUMPED IN TO SAY THAT RESORT TO THIS POWER BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE COULD ONLY HAVE ONE RESULT, NAMELY TO KILL THE CONVENTION IMMEDIATELY. THE SECRETARY OF STATE REPEATED THE SUBSTANCE OF JAMES'S INTERVENTION.

I HAVE RARELY SEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE SO ANTI-SDLP. HE SAID THAT, IN A RECENT DIVISION IN THE HOUSE, GERRY FITT VOTED IN FAVOUR OF TROOPS OUT. THIS HE REGARDED AS A SCANDALOUS PERFORMANCE GIVEN FITT'S EFFORTS IN PRIVATE TO KEEP THE TROOPS THERE AND TO RETAIN IN DETENTION THE HARD CORE OF THE IRA.

THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE I GOT FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS THAT HE IS STANDING ASIDE FROM THE CONVENTION OPERATION AND THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION OF INTERFERING. HIS ATTITUDE IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ARGUE AS MUCH AS THEY WANT ABOUT RULES OF PROCEDURE AND OTHER MATTERS BECAUSE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS ARE CLEARLY SET OUT IN THE LEGISLATION.

WE TOO SHOULD NOT BE OVER-INFLUENCED BY WHAT WE READ IN THE PRESS OR BY WHAT WE HEAR FROM THE SDLP. IF HE WERE NOW TO INTERVENE ON THE QUESTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE IT WOULD BE THE END OF THE CONVENTION - TO WHICH JAMES ADDED THE COMMENT "AN END BROUGHT ABOUT AS A RESULT OF REPRESENTATIONS FROM DUBLIN". RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY I TOOK THIS COMMENT BY JAMES TO SUGGEST THAT CONTACT BETWEEN US AND THE SDLP ON THE MATTER COULD NOT REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

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ONE OF THE THINGS THAT DISTURBED ME ABOUT THE DISCUSSION WAS THIS. WHEN I BROUGHT UP THE QUESTION OF THE NEED TO AVOID AN EROSION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONVENTION CHAIRMAN, JAMES CUT IN TO SAY THAT THE CHAIRMAN IS MERELY A SERVANT OF THE CONVENTION. I SAID THIS STRUCK ME AS AN EXTRAORDINARY REMARK. I SAID I WOULD EXPECT THE CHAIRMAN TO GUIDE, TO INSPIRE AND TO CONCILIATE AS A MINIMUM. REES AGREED BUT ADDED THAT HE MUST NEVERTHELESS BE THE SERVANT OF THE CONVENTION. I MIGHT ADD THAT AT A LUNCHEON LATER FOR OUR VISITING PARLIAMENTARIANS I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY TO BILL HARDING THAT I WAS ASTONISHED THAT DOUGLAS JAMES SHOULD REGARD THE FUNCTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AS NO MORE THAN A RUBBER STAMP RESPONSIBILITY. BILL HARDING THOUGHT MY INTERPRETATION OF WHAT JAMES SAID AS BEING TOO NARROW.

END OF MESSAGE

DOS

21/5/75

TIME: 15.57

5300G ESTR E1
HIBERNIA LDN

CORRECTION TO PAGE 2
FIRST PARAGRAPH THIRD LINE "ONLY HAVE ON RESULT,"
SHOULD READ "ONLY HAVE ONE RESULT"

OK PL+?

536+