

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2006/131/1398
Creation Date(s):	2 December 1976
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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NORTHERN IRELAND PQS

A DOZEN NORTHERN IRELAND PQS WERE TAKEN DURING QUESTION TIME THIS AFTERNOON. THEY RANGED OVER SUCH MATTERS AS THE GENERAL SECURITY SITUATION ATTACKS ON THE UDR, THE SUPPLY OF ARMS FROM ABROAD, COMPENSATION FOR CRIMINAL INJURIES, HOUSING, NI REPRESENTATION AT WESTMINSTER, CHANGES IN ELECTORAL LAW AND AFFORESTATION.

A QUESTION FROM BIGGS-DAVISON ABOUT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS OF THE SECURITY FORCES PROMPTED AN ALTERCATION BETWEEN JOAN CARSON AND GERRY FITT WHEN CARSON ACCUSED CANAVAN, COOPER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SDLP OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT UDR MURDERS. FITT ASKED MASON TO CONDEMN THIS SLANDER ON SDLP AND SAID RESPONSIBILITY FOR MURDERS LAY ENTIRELY WITH PROVISIONAL IRA. THE SDLP HAD CONDEMNED EVERYONE OF THE MURDERS. MASON DECLINED TO BE DRAWN INTO WHAT HE SAID WAS PARTY POLITICS BUT POINTED OUT THAT SDLP HAD REPEATEDLY CONDEMNED IRA.

ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS AND EXPLOSIVES FROM ABROAD THE HOUSE WAS TOLD THAT THERE WAS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE FLOW OF ARMS FROM THE UNITED STATES HAD BEEN REDUCED. THE AMOUNT REACHING NI FROM EASTERN EUROPE HAD NEVER BEEN LARGE ANYWAY. THE GOVERNMENT'S BELIEF THAT MOST COMMERCIAL (AS OPPOSED TO IMPROVISED) EXPLOSIVES ORIGINATE IN THE REPUBLIC IS WELL KNOWN. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THIS AND IS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO STOP IT. PASLEY REQUESTED STATISTICS ON THE PROPORTION OF EXPLOSIONS CAUSED BY COMMERCIAL AS OPPOSED TO IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVES, BUT NONE WERE AVAILABLE. *very different from our fig*

THE 285 MURDERS SO FAR THIS YEAR 119 WERE SECTARIAN. 91
PEOPLE HAD BEEN CHARGED FOR 45 OF THESE MURDERS. MASON
HIGHLIGHTED IN PARTICULAR THE GREAT INCREASE IN "CALLOUS AND
DISCRIMINATE" ATTACKS ON OFF-DUTY MEMBERS OF THE UDR. JOHN
PARDOE THE LIBERAL MP SAID PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY FIND THIS
FIGURE UNACCEPTABLE AND CALLED FOR A REVIEW OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT
IN NI. MASON DEPLORED THAT PARDOE SHOULD ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE
ASSOCIATED WITH THE TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT. WITHDRAWAL COULD
LEAD TO A BLOODBATH (MANY CRIES OF 'HEAR HEAR'). MRS DUNWOODY
LABOUR SPOKE OF THE 'APPALLING CONSENSUS' IN THE HOUSE ON BRITISH
TROOPS REMAINING IN NI AND CALLED FOR THE REPLACEMENT BY UN FORCES.
MASON SAID THAT HE MUST DEPRECATE EVERY SENTIMENT THAT SHE HAD
EXPRESSED. HE WAS FUNDAMENTALLY OPPOSED TO THE CALL FOR
WITHDRAWAL. NI WAS AND WOULD REMAIN A BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY.

ASKED BY PAISLEY ABOUT THE CRIMINAL JURISDICTION ACT 1975 MASON
REPLIED THAT IT WOULD COME INTO FORCE ON THE 1ST JUNE THIS YEAR
BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO SOUND EVIDENCE THAT ANYONE WHO HAD COMMITTED AN
OFFENCE IN NI SINCE THAT DATE WAS NOW IN THE REPUBLIC. PRIOR
TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT THE RUC HAD WANTED 59 SUSPECTED
TERRORISTS WHOM THEY BELIEVED WERE IN THE REPUBLIC.

ON THE QUESTION OF INCREASED REPRESENTATION AT WESTMINSTER,
MASON SAID THE FIRST PRIORITY OF NI POLITICIANS SHOULD BE TO
FORM AN ACCEPTABLE SYSTEM OF DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT IN THE PROVINCE
AND THEN THE QUESTION OF INCREASED REPRESENTATION COULD BE
CONSIDERED.

KT 2/12/76 TIME.... X4 16.52

E-A DUBLIN
F-A1 LDN

Mr. Henry
This statement needs
to be incorporated in
our brief - please
bring to Mr. Bamber
attention H8 6/12

David Dwyer
Pls cc on Bamber
attn 1st 21/12/76