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NIO/5/14

Stormont Castle, Belfast
23 May 1977

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Roy Mason MP, was told at a security review meeting at Stormont Castle today that during the past week a number of important arrests had been made in connection with serious crime in the Province. Forty-one people had been charged, including three with attempted murder, sixteen with fire-arms and explosives offences and sixteen with armed robbery.

The Chief Constable of the RUC, Mr Kenneth Newman, said that this figure included nine people with officer status in the Provisional IRA and he pointed out that the number of young people who had been charged with serious offences to date this year was 102 compared with a total of 175 last year. It was regrettable that while older people involved in terrorism were steadily being brought before the courts, parents were still not exercising sufficient authority and supervision to prevent children being enticed into violence.

The Chief Constable said that the effectiveness of crime squads was now becoming very evident; Headquarters' Crime Squad alone had carried out approximately 100 operations between January and April of this year resulting in over 120 people being charged with 185 offences. These included fourteen charges of murder, twenty-four of attempted murder and over seventy with fire-arms and explosives offences.

Mr Newman said that as a result of police intelligence the largest haul ever of incendiary devices - 110 cassette-type - was found in South Londonderry. It was believed that these had been ready for a Provisional IRA operation.

It was reported that a total of 100 people had now been charged as a result of the UUAC civil disruption and that thirty-three others had been released for summons.

These figures did not include people reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions for directions.

The GOC Northern Ireland, General Sir David House, said that during the past week a total of nine weapons, including two sub-machine guns, two rifles, four pistols and a mortar had been seized and 40 lbs of explosives recovered or dealt with.