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Mr. Molyneux re Public Order Proposals

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Interview with Mr. Jim Molyneaux on Radio Ulster at 1 p.m.

Interviewer: Mr. Molyneaux may we have clarification from you first of all. Is there or is there not to be a day of marching in protest against the Public Order laws on April 11?

Mr. Molyneaux: Well, that remains to be seen. The Public Order legislation has been under discussion by various groupings over a period of weeks. The 4th of April was certainly one day discussed because it would be probably the first Saturday after the legislation takes effect. The 11th is possibly a more suitable day if some kind of demonstrations were to be organised. The up-to-date position was that Mr. Paisley and I had a telephone conversation last evening, I was in London, he was in Brussels. I reported to him that, for example, yesterday morning we had had a request to meet the officers of the Grand Orange Lodge because they're greatly concerned about all of this. We took account of certain speculation in the Press, we decided that we would go ahead with the consultations with the Orange Order and the various other groupings who had asked to see us and that we would make no statement in the meantime.

Interviewer: Mr. Molyneaux would you wish to see such a day of marching, would you regard it as appropriate?

Mr. Molyneaux: Well I think there has got to be some means of registering our opposition to the peculiar laws which have been introduced if only to illustrate their sheer unworkability.

Interviewer: May I ask you do you see marching as an appropriate means of demonstrating that?

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Mr. Molyneux: Yes. I think that is a possibility when we have, as I say, discussed the operations and discussed the problems with various other responsible bodies.

Interviewer: And would you, Mr. Molyneux, if there were to be such marches, want the details of those marches to be given to the police seven days in advance as the new law will require?

Mr. Molyneux: It's not possible to comply with a good many of those requirements because they are plain nonsense. For example, what constitutes a procession is something which no-one quite knows. It's interesting that the Northern Ireland Minister in the Lords, speaking on the Debate in the Lords, said that in some aspects of this an Inspector of the RUC, for example, would require the wisdom of Solomon to make sense of the Order. I think that all those things have got to be tested and I think that it is quite legitimate for people to test them in a constitutional way and in a way which is not going to come into conflict and confrontation with the security forces who have quite enough on their hands at the moment, as we have seen this past week.

Interviewer: May I have, in a sentence, confirmation that you do not see the notice required being given.

Mr. Molyneux: I think that that is a possibility because I think that in some cases, a good many cases, people are not going to be aware of precisely what the law means and I think that all these things have got to be teased out and I think that if we can illustrate to the world in general that this is a nonsense law then the sooner we will get back to something approaching the law which Parliament made here last year for the bigger island of Great Britain, which did not include those matters which have been re-introduced by the NIO, well which Parliament itself rejected the previous year. I think it would be to everybody's benefit if those things were taken out and dumped out of the legislation.

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Interviewer: Mr. Molyneaux, can I ask you about your letter to the Prime Minister. What is it that you have asked of Mrs. Thatcher in regard to security to which you referred in that letter?.

Mr. Molyneaux: Well I'm going much wider than simply asking that this or that assurance be given about tightening of security in a given area. What I've said to the Prime Minister is that on humanitarian grounds I beg you to review and recast the Government's whole political and security strategy and indicate how much longer, to use your own words at the signing ceremony, "you are prepared to tolerate a situation of continuing violence". That's the request I'm making and I hope that that humanitarian plea will be supported throughout the Northern Ireland community by all those who have understandably been condemning the atrocities particularly of the past two or three weeks. I hope that they too will lend their weight to my appeal that it's now quite clear that the Anglo-Irish Agreement is doing the opposite of what it is supposed to do and now is the time for the Government to not piecemeal but to look at its whole political and security strategy because the two are interlocked.