CAB/4/1423/18

1968/43

CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT STORMONT CASTLE
ON THURSDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 1968, AT 11.15 A.M.

PRESENT:- The Prime Minister
The Minister of Commerce
The Minister of Finance
The Minister of Home Affairs
The Minister of Health and Social Services
The Minister of Education
The Minister of Agriculture
The Minister of Development
The Minister in the Senate

ALSO PRESENT:- The Attorney-General (for Items 1, 2 and 3)
The Chief Whip

The Secretary to the Cabinet
The Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet
The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

Mr. J.E. Greeves   The Inspector General, R.U.C.
Mr. J.G. Hill   The Deputy Inspector General, R.U.C.
(for Item 1)

1. SECURITY SITUATION

The Deputy Inspector General presented a Police analysis of the
present situation and Ministers gave special attention to some particular
features which emerged, notably the people and parties who were
infiltrating and increasingly motivating the Civil Rights movement; the
need to re-assure moderate Unionists that the Government had the
situation well in hand; and the special measures required to enable the
Police to exercise more effective control.

It was agreed:

(a) that the Reserve Force should be increased by a further two
platoons (in addition to the one extra platoon already
formed) and that special training in riot control drill
would be given;

(b) that sufficient additional Land-Rovers should be provided
as a matter of urgency to give the police a greater degree
of mobility - a requirement of 50 was estimated of which 20
had already been ordered;

/(c) that a

(c) that a Police Public Relations Officer (with necessary
supporting staff) should be appointed to deal with the Press
and Television media and perhaps also to include police
welfare functions within his duties;

(d) that the existing rule requiring all police comment on
incidents to be made from Headquarters should be strictly
enforced; and

(e) that a statement should be issued by the Minister of Home
Affairs on the steps being taken to strengthen the police
force, including reference to the mobilisation of members
of the B Special Constabulary agreed at the meeting on
28th November, 1968.

2. REPLY TO MR. HAROLD WILSON'S LETTER OF 19TH NOVEMBER, 1968, ON MATTERS
DISCUSSED AT THE DOWNING STREET MEETING ON 4TH NOVEMBER, 1968.

The draft reply circulated to Ministers was approved, subject
to certain amendments.

3. REPLY TO MR. HAROLD WILSON'S LETTER OF 14TH NOVEMBER, 1968, ABOUT THE
COMMISSION ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Some amendments were made in the draft reply circulated to Ministers
which, subject to these, was approved.

The Minister of Home Affairs argued that in the third paragraph
after the reference to Mr. Attlee's pledge of 28th October, 1948, about
no change taking place in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland
without Northern Ireland's free agreement, the point should be made that
any question of a change in this pledge would be vigorously opposed.
It was, however, felt that it would be better to make a point of this
kind informally through the Home Office.

4. AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY (LOAN) BILL

Approved.

5. QUEEN'S SPEECH - MOVERS AND SECONDERS

The Cabinet agreed that the following should move and second the
Addresses:-

In the Senate:- Senator J.E.N. Barnhill to move,
Senator D. McClelland to second.

In the Commons:- Mr. J.D. Taylor to move,
Mr. W. Scott to second.

/6.

6. **VISITS ABROAD**

There being no comments by Ministers the visit notified by the Secretary to the Cabinet's Memorandum of the 28th November, 1968, was approved.

Terence O'Neill