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Comments by the Inspector General on the Report by the three Westminster M.Ps.

(1) As I understand it, these three persons attended in Londonderry on 5th October at the invitation of Mr. Gerry Fitt, M.P., and I would wish to make it clear that they must have been aware that the procession in the Waterside Ward was banned.

(2) Nowhere is it mentioned in their report that the clearest instructions were given to all those present in the Station Square by County Inspector Meharg that there was a ban; that they should not participate in the march, and the warning given to women and spectators.

(3) Their report does not indicate the fact that the procession, when it did start to march, deviated from the route which it said it was going to go and turned straight down Duke Street towards Craigavon Bridge.

(4) They assess the number of persons present as approximately 3,000 but they entirely omit to mention the fact that in the police estimate some 300 to 500 of those at a point adjoining the Railway Square were, in fact, Protestant opposition. This was the very factor anticipated by the police and let to the advice tendered to the Minister to ban the parade in the sectors of the city where the ban was imposed.

(5) They make much play of the party in rear at the time the meeting was going on in Duke Street, and it is correct that they were there. There was a very good reason for them to be there because immediately adjoining the point where they took up position were demolished buildings containing more than ample ammunition for violent demonstration. It was, however, I think, a tactical error on the field that this party did not draw aside when the advance was made by police from the Craigavon end of Duke Street towards the Railway Station to enable the crowd to scatter freely.

(6) There is the statement that the three eye witnesses saw little retaliation by the crowd, but the fact remains that 16 police were injured in the Duke Street affray.

(7) I have, as stated at the time in my covering submission to the Minister, absolute confidence in the accuracy of the reports prepared by County Inspector Meharg, who was in charge at the time. He is an officer of the highest standard of probity, and with the small force available to him - less than 80 men - I am satisfied that he handled the situation in the best possible manner in the light of the circumstances prevailing.

(8) I do not say this idly because during the entire period of the Duke Street affray I was present in the Operations Room at this Headquarters and while not all the R.T. signals were available for us to read I was able to read sufficient to follow the progress of what was happening and to confirm the timings of the major changes in the position as outlined in the report of the County Inspector.