

SECRET

1969/37

CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD
AT STORMONT CASTLE ON FRIDAY, 15TH AUGUST, 1969, AT NOON

PRESENT:- The Prime Minister
The Minister in the Senate
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 Commerce
The Minister of Development
The Minister of State at the Ministry of
Development
The Leader of the House of Commons

ALSO PRESENT:- The Inspector General

The Secretary to the Cabinet
The Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet

DISORDERS IN BELFAST

The Inspector General outlined the situation which had developed in Belfast, and it was decided that an immediate request should be made for the assistance of troops in the City.

The Minister of Home Affairs reported that he had decided to set up a Welfare Committee at official level to deal with homelessness and other problems arising out of the disturbances.

He also reported that I.R.A. agitators were being held in accordance with the previous day's decision and that an Appeals Tribunal was being constituted under Mr. Frank Patton, Q.C.

The military experts were continuing to assess what would be involved in blocking unapproved roads. It was the general view of Ministers that this should be done if feasible, in view of the danger of infiltration.

The possibility of a curfew in at least part of Belfast was discussed, but some doubts were expressed about the feasibility of enforcement. At all events, this would clearly depend on the views of the G.O.C. once troops were deployed.

There was discussion of the need for machinery to provide swift and accurate information and rebut malicious rumours.

The Prime Minister informed his colleagues of a further telephone conversation with the Home Secretary, from which it seemed that a further meeting at Ministerial level would be likely next week.

It was agreed that consideration should be given in the new circumstances to restoring protection of key installations, where this had been phased out. Particular attention should be paid to the Harbour Estate and to the desirability of providing the Special Constabulary with a useful role.

Isaiah