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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH HOME SECRETARY -

WEDNESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 1970

PRESENT:

Home Secretary
Minister of State at the Home Office
Sir Philip Allen
Mr. Oliver Wright
Mr. Neil Cairncross
Mr. David Faulkner

Prime Minister
Sir Cecil Bateman
Sir Harold Black
Mr. K. P. Bloomfield
Mr. B. R. Cummings

1. LAW AND ORDER

There was a general discussion on the law and order situation, with particular reference being made to the activities of the People's Democracy and the Civil Rights Association. On the Protestant side the Home Secretary thought it might be good tactics to press Rev. Ian Paisley to disavow and condemn the use of explosives.

The Prime Minister said that the continuing criticism of the level of Police activity in the Falls Road and Bogside areas was making the current political situation very difficult. He added that he thought the militant elements in the People's Democracy and the Civil Rights Association were becoming increasingly isolated. The Home Secretary suggested that the complete redevelopment of the Falls/Shankill area might have a major impact in the long term. The Prime Minister said that this idea had been mooted before and whilst theoretically attractive was full of enormous practical difficulties. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to the proposal.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The Prime Minister stressed the need for drastic action to tackle the unemployment problem. He asked for the Home Secretary's full support for the development plan. The Home Secretary promised his support but thought it possible that some alterations in the plan might mean the creation of more jobs and possibly additional Treasury finance. He therefore proposed to invite an eminent economist to examine the plan from this viewpoint and he thought that this would not delay the

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process for more than a couple of weeks. The Prime Minister stated that the present five-year plan expired on the 31st March but if a delay of a few weeks meant the prospect of additional jobs and finance then he welcomed the Home Secretary's proposal.

3. HOUSING

The Home Secretary said that he was authorised to agree to a programme of 73,500 houses over the five-year period. He added that the door was not firmly closed on the balance of 1,500 houses and discussions could be resumed in the future if that proved necessary. The Prime Minister welcomed this decision. The local authority subsidy position was then discussed and it was made clear that the Treasury were completely opposed to any proposal for relieving local authorities of their contributions. Sir Cecil Bateman pointed out the difficulties and said that a rejection of this proposal would make it very difficult to sell the Central Housing Authority to the Local Authorities. He added that he would go back to the Treasury for further discussions. The Home Secretary said he appreciated the problems and would in the event of a deadlock be prepared to discuss the matter further.

4. ALDERGROVE

The Home Secretary said that discussions about Aldergrove Airport appeared to be in a state of flux but it was quite clear that Northern Ireland could not do without an Airport even for a very short period. He added that approval had been given for the contouring of the runways. The Prime Minister said that the runway extension was the most pressing problem as the new jets would not be able to use it in 1972. He added that the Ministry of Development had suggested a plan which would accomplish both the contouring of the runway and the extension without any closure. It was revealed that no decision had yet been taken about the suitability of Sydenham ^{pending} ~~finding~~ consultation with the operators and that Ballykelly had been ruled out. If the airlines regarded Sydenham as unsuitable the Home Secretary said he would be prepared to press for other solutions.

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The handing over of Aldergrove Airport to the Northern Ireland Government was discussed briefly and the Home Secretary indicated that he thought agreement could be reached in the near future which would be satisfactory to both parties.

5. ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

The Prime Minister indicated that the Boyes Report on the R.U.C. has just been received but had not yet been approved. He said that its major recommendation was an increase in the establishment of the R.U.C. of almost 50 per cent. He added that increasing the size of the Force from 3,500 to 4,940 would mean an increase in expenditure from £9.4 million to £11.2 million on salaries alone. The Home Secretary said that he was absolutely convinced of the necessity for an increase in the strength of the R.U.C. and he would certainly lend his full support when proposals went to the Treasury. The Home Secretary suggested that in order to speed up recruitment some use might be made of training facilities in Great Britain. The Prime Minister said that he would certainly consider the Home Secretary's suggestion but felt that the basic problem was one of recruitment not training. The Minister of State pointed to the high proportion of officers over the age of fifty and suggested that when the establishment was increased the need for in-service training courses should be considered.

6. ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

The Prime Minister indicated that the G.O.C. was pleased with the pace of recruitment but his own feelings were that many members of the Ulster Special Constabulary were holding back their applications until the permanent staff of the U.S.C. had resolved their difficulties over pay and compensation terms. In response to a question from the Prime Minister the Home Secretary agreed to take up with the Ministry of Defence the question of the lack of contact between the Training Majors and members of the Ulster Special Constabulary.

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The effective date of the ending of U.S.C. duties was then discussed. The Home Secretary stressed that in his view the Ulster Special Constabulary must be wound up as soon as possible and that alternative arrangements - possibly an increase in Army activities - would have to be made if the Ulster Defence Regiment was not operational by the 1st April. The Prime Minister said that he was committed to the maintenance of a local defence force and he could not agree to the Ulster Special Constabulary being stood down until the Ulster Defence Regiment was capable of carrying out its operational tasks for which he thought a minimum strength of at least 4,000 would be needed. The Home Secretary agreed that this figure seemed of the appropriate order but he said that although he was not being adamant that the Ulster Defence Regiment should take over for the Ulster Special Constabulary on any particular date the Prime Minister should be in no doubt that he wished to see the Ulster Special Constabulary stood down at an early date.

7. GALLAGHER CASE

The question of the calling in of Scotland Yard was discussed and the Prime Minister agreed to discuss the matter with the Minister of Home Affairs and the Inspector General but the effect on police morale would have to be carefully weighed. Sir Harold Black said that the Inspector General was not opposed to the idea in principle although he was completely satisfied with the Royal Ulster Constabulary investigation. He added that the case was not yet completely closed as some fresh evidence was being considered but there was, naturally, concern lest the principle be extended to several other cases where there were similar allegations of police culpability. The Home Secretary said he thought the Gallagher case could be considered in isolation in view of the peculiar circumstances and he would be prepared to defend restricting an outside investigation to this one case.

/8. SPECIAL POWERS ACTS

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8. SPECIAL POWERS ACTS

It was suggested that a revocation of some of the Regulations might help to lessen tension. Major Chichester-Clark said that the repeal of the Special Powers Acts and Regulations was a very emotive issue which he thought could best be handled by making a clean sweep and dealing with the whole problem of repeal and replacements. A general discussion then took place and it was agreed that the Home Office would prepare a paper on their ideas for consideration by the Northern Ireland Government.

9. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS OR PROCURATOR FISCAL SYSTEM

The discussion took place on the respective merits of the two systems and it was agreed to await the findings of the Working Party who were examining the problem. It was pointed out that the real difficulty lay in finding suitable people to act as "procurators".

10. URBAN PROGRAMME

The Minister of State said that she had had a full discussion last week with the Minister of Community Relations about the urban programme. She said that a similar programme had been successful in England but felt that the youth problem (16-19 year-olds) must be tackled at the same time. The Minister of State also made the point that the financing of such youth projects should not be done by the Ministry of Education. The Prime Minister said that he would welcome any support which the Home Office could give with the urban programme and he agreed with the Minister of State's remarks about the need for suitable youth projects.

11. JOINT R.U.C. AND ARMY APPRECIATION

The Prime Minister said that the plan which had been prepared would clearly have to be held in abeyance because of recent events. The Home Secretary expressed agreement with the Prime Minister.

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/12. ARMY TACTICS

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12. ARMY TACTICS

The Prime Minister said that he thought a slightly tougher line by the Army might help to improve the situation, especially if more people were arrested. The Home Secretary said that he felt when the law was blatantly being broken arrests should be made and he agreed to raise the matter with the Secretary of State for Defence.

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