

2. PRESENT SITUATION AND THREAT

The Chairman stated that according to latest information the strike would commence on Tuesday 3 May. Efforts will be made by UUAC to persuade workers to strike and business to close. There may not be great emphasis on road blockage. Power supplies are likely to be affected early on. Government response will be firm and Secretary of State will not give ground and may make a public statement to this effect before Tuesday.

Department should continue with their preparations and not be unduly worried about the fact that they are preparing leaking out.

Provisional arrangements have been made in relation to MACM.

3. STATE OF READINESS

All Departments confirmed that they were in the final stages of checking contingency plans, topping up on essentials and checking communications and generators.

4. EDUCATION

Mr Meharg said that there may be a problem on distribution of examination papers due in week commencing 2 May and due for final distribution in mid-May. They intend to run as normally as possible and if the situation demands it may ask for some SF assistance. The availability of this assistance will again depend on the situation at the time.

5. CIVIL SERVICE

Dr Allott told the meeting that Staff side will co-operate with redeployment measures. Lists of redeployable staff have been updated. Fuel farm vouchers have been issued to Assistant Secretaries of Establishment Divisions, but these will only be issued in dire emergency cases. Mr McVitty warned that panic buying by the general public before implementation of the plan could put undue pressure on fuel farm stocks. Dr Allott requested that NIO do not take over GEM but Miss Simmons replied that if the situation demands it NIO will have no alternative but to do so.

6. ENVIRONMENT

Mr Campbell asked Departments with exceptional needs for water e.g. a patient on a kidney machine, to liaise with his Department. His Department are continuing to examine plans for distribution of purification tablets, but there will be no distribution until absolutely necessary.

7. MANPOWER

Mr O'Connor sees his Department's role as one of helping other Departments and has no problems to report.

8. FINANCE

Mr Macdonald reported no problems.

9. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr Lyness and Mr Ensor reported no problems on the benefit and health sides respectively.

10. POST OFFICE

Mr Miller and Mr Reilly reported no problems on telecommunications and postal services respectively.

11. POLICE

Ch Supt Hood asked Commerce to examine petrol cover in Magherafelt. He also asked Departments particularly Agriculture and Army to check on availability of heavy cutting equipment e.g. for steel hawsers.

12. COMMERCE

Ports - Mr McKay said that availability of labour is the main problem. He also confirmed that Belfast is the only port which will be suitable for unloading Army equipment. A wharf has been provisionally set aside.

Petrol and Oil - Mr McVitty confirmed that the oil plan covers petrol, oil and lubricants. Mr Carruth said that there may be a problem with small bulk users in the agricultural industry.

13. AGRICULTURE

Mr Speers reports that the major cold stores who are without stand-by power would be able to last without power for about 1 week. Mr Murray confirmed that there is 1-2 weeks food supply with retailers and 3-4 weeks supply with wholesalers. Yeast could be a problem in the baking industry but it is hoped to have one week's supply by 2 May. Bakeries are topping up on raw materials and mills are concentrating on flour. There is no problem at this stage on animal feedstuffs.

14. INFORMATION

Mr Woods reported no problems. Commerce have plans to set up a public information centre for their services. NIO (SC) will keep Departments abreast of major events.

15. SITREP

A paper on sitrepts was distributed outlining likely content and a distribution chain.

Note by Secretary

The effectiveness of the distribution chain will be evident after the first one or two sitreps. Local variations may be necessary to speed or improve the distribution.

16. MACM

Representatives from SF ODC and Commerce considered separately the mechanics of MACM assistance. A separate note of these discussions has been prepared and circulated to those involved.

Circulation: Those Present
Mr N Kells DHSS
Mr W Willis NIO

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