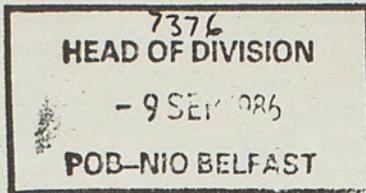


E. R.



P126/86

CC: PS/SOS (B&L)-T
PS/Mr Scott (B&L)-T
Mr Stephens
Mr Chesterton-T
Mr Ferneyhough
Mr Gilliland
Mr Blackwell
~~Mr [redacted]~~
Mr Bell - T
Mr McConnell
Mr Ferguson-T

Mr [signature]
11/10/86

1 file.

MR SCOTT'S MEETING WITH THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE POLICE
FEDERATION ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1986

My note of Mr Scott's meeting with the Police Federation on 2 September referred to an attachment at Annex A which was inadvertently left out. It forms the basis of the opening remarks made by the Chairman of the Federation and is now attached.

AMANDA JOHNSTON
PS/Mr Scott

9 September 1986

SP

1 Thank Minister for the invitation to come and see him - an invitation which includes the entire Central Committee of the Federation. This Committee was elected only last January and can therefore claim to truly represent its members.

2 Although this is the first meeting to be held between the Minister and all Central Committee we would not see this as a totally formal affair - more the opportunity for the Federation to be briefed direct by an NIO Minister and we would hope just as usefully for a Minister to hear grass-roots feelings and beliefs for himself. Some of the matters which arise may require more consideration than we can give at this meeting, in order to leave either of us with conclusive answers. If the Minister shares this view we would hope that there may be other meetings from time to time.

3 As you know Minister, life for the RUC and our families has not been very pleasant since the late sixties and in the months since the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed it has been more difficult than any of us can remember. I must emphasise here that we are not here on our part to discuss the Agreement: that is government policy and has therefore nothing to do with us as policemen and women. We are only concerned, in fact worried about the policing consequences for us as federated members.

BUILDING PROGRAMME

4 The deterioration in the security situation with regard to the civilian population has hit the building programme for RUC stations and accommodation. You have our sympathy for the difficulty that the Police Authority are in and we can understand the reluctance of contractors and workers to do security work. However, failure to press on with the building programme is giving the IRA an enormous propaganda success and encouraging them in this recent new dimension of threatening any civilian who has any involvement or association with the security forces. The police, who are already feeling isolated socially with the community are being threatened with a withdrawal of infrastructural support by the way of services.

The building programme must be finished no matter what the financial cost or difficulty. The accommodation of police officers needs to be upgraded and failure to see physical progress on the ground makes us look helpless. If we cannot establish sufficient security to build stations how can we claim to be in control of the overall security situation.

AUTUMN PACKAGE

5 We understand that a package of proposals is envisaged for the Autumn as part of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. For instance it has been mooted that the Flags and Emblems Act is to be repealed; that the Public Order Act is being looked at and that the Emergency Provisions Act is under examination. Is it possible for the Minister to explain the general nature of the package and what the law and order implications might be for the Force? We are concerned that repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act might lead to more opportunities for provocation and that we might get more examples of shop floor disruption such as occurred at Shorts and could occur in other factories where the balance of the workforce might be more even.

SUMMARY

6 We have a situation in Northern Ireland where the RUC have been attacked physically and verbally from all sides, more so in recent months. That has inevitably sapped the morale of officers, particularly through family pressure of wives and parents on younger officers. This pressure does not reduce our professionalism. The fact that we enjoy the reputation that we do is testimony to how high our standards are. But because we are professional we have become alarmed at how policing and law and order have been totally sucked into the Anglo-Irish Agreement conferences so that policing in Northern Ireland, our credibility and our acceptability to the nationalist minority seem to be the sole subject for public discussion among Northern and Southern politicians.

Is it not possible to remove policing either from the agenda or at least be listed further down the agenda.

Could the mechanism for achieving advancement in border security not be operated outside of the Anglo-Irish conference? I ask these questions not just because we think that it might make the police less prominent politically but continued references to the police and security are only underlining the Government's own embarrassment and difficulties of securing an improvement in border security sufficient to convince the community of the merit of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.