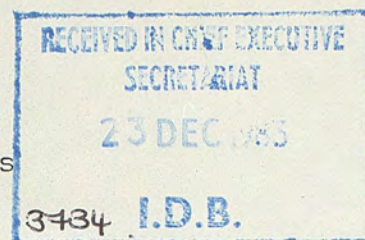


COVERING
E.R.

CC PS/PUS (B & L)
Mr Brennan
NI Permanent Secretaries
Mr Tate
Mr Angel
Mr Buchanan
Mr Burns
Mr Buxton
Mr Carvill
Mr Mills
Mr Murray
Mr Norris
Mr Coulson
Mr Morrison
Mr Edis
Mr Boyd



HCS/12/64

Mr Bourn

23/12

LIAISON BETWEEN THE RUC AND NI GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

The RUC have now confirmed their agreement to the minutes
... of the meeting on 16 November: I attach a copy for your
information and that of copy recipients.

AGM

A G McCORMICK

PS/Sir Ewart Bell

22 December 1983

COVERING

RECEIVED IN CHIEF EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

LIAISON BETWEEN THE RUC AND NI GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, STORMONT HOUSE ON
WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER.

Those present:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Sir Ewart Bell | Head of the NICS | Sir John Hermon | Chief Constable |
| Mr Bourn | NIO | DCC McAtamney | |
| Mr Buxton | NIO | ACC McAllister | |
| Mr Barry | DOE | ACC McCullough | |
| Mr Boyd | DOE | ACC Steenson | |
| Mr Tate | IDB | Mr Cummings | PANI |
| Mr Buchanan | DHSS | Mr Millar | |
| Mr Mills | DHSS | | |
| Mr Murray | DFP | | |
| Mr Morrison | DANI | | |
| Mr McCormick | | | |

1. Sir Ewart welcomed the Chief Constable and his colleagues to Stormont House.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 28 JANUARY 1983

(a) Betting and Gaming Legislation

2. Effective dealings between the RUC and DHSS had led to much progress on most of the matters which had been outstanding from the last meeting. The RUC view was being taken on the question of the confiscation of gaming machines and their contents. On the present timetable it was hoped that the order would be ready for publication early in the New Year: it would clearly be the subject of some controversy. It would be important to create increased awareness of the necessity of the legislation, and its value in inhibiting the flow of funds to paramilitary organisations: this could be facilitated by close liaison between the information officers of the RUC and the Government. Work on the Liquour Licensing Legislation would begin as soon as possible once the current Order had been taken to an appropriate stage.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(b) Delays in relation to provision of RUC Buildings

3. The terms of reference on a Rayner study on Procedures for Authorisation of Works on RUC Buildings had been agreed: it was hoped that the study could be completed within 3 to 5 months. In the meantime PANI and the Works Service of DOE were reviewing procedures, especially in relation to provision of security works.

(c) Squatting

4. The number of squatters had fallen from 1866 in December 1982 to 1467 in October 1983: this reduction was concentrated in Andersonstown and the Falls/Whiterock areas. In line with the recommendations of the Working Party on Squatting and the Law:-

- (a) procedural changes in the Enforcement Rules which came into effect on 1 November 1983 will speed up the process of obtaining warrants for possession of Housing Executive properties; and
- (b) legislative amendments to speed up the progress of squatting cases in Magistrates Courts are being included in a Criminal Justice Amendment Order which is expected to come into operation in 1984.

Liaison arrangements with the RUC were working effectively.

FRAUDS AND RACKETS

(a) Racketeering in the construction industry

5. Fraud and intimidation remain a major problem in the construction industry. Both republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations operated rackets which were a major source of finance to these organisations. The UDA and the UVF operate 'security' organisations on building sites; INLA and PIRA obtain finance through extortion from construction workers 'doing the double'; tax exemption certificate fraud was also a significant problem. These and other rackets tended to push up contract prices in the building industry.

6. The RUC were unable to do as much as they would like against such rackets. DOE were reviewing their open tender procedures in relation to contracts: a change to a 'select list' system might reduce the scope for fraud. The regulations for control of security organisations had been reviewed in Great Britain and it had been concluded that there was no case for special statutory control: the RUC would however be putting forward a submission proposing that separate action to register and control security firms was needed in the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland.

(b) Video Piracy

7. Five thousand copy tapes had been seized from 6 libraries in February 1983: more recently a further 5000 had been seized from another 6 libraries. Legislation to control video recordings had recently received a second reading, and the RUC would be meeting with DHSS to discuss this legislation in detail.

(c) Benefit Fraud

8. While the Fraud Investigation Branch of DHSS continued to have close operational dealings with the RUC, it was not always possible for the Department to act on police evidence, because of the necessarily covert nature of their relationship. Developments since the last meeting included:-

- (i) the examination of social security fraud by the Health and Social Services Committee of the Assembly. DHSS had provided a paper to the Committee and the RUC had also been asked to provide evidence. NIO were monitoring carefully the procedures for dealings between the RUC and Assembly Committees, in order to ensure that no precedents were set which might prove awkward in other contexts;
- (ii) media interest in social security fraud had increased, the Trade Unions being particularly critical of the strenuous efforts by DHSS to combat fraud. The coverage given to the subject in the Andersonstown News and Republican News had given rise to much concern; and

- (iii) DHSS was concerned about an apparent increase in cross-border fraud and was liaising with the Department of Social Welfare in Dublin in an effort to control it.

(d) DANI Capital Grants

9. DANI were concerned about the increasing number of fraud cases arising from payment of Capital Grant to farmers. A recent Rayner study had led to a reduction in the controls over payment of grant. High grant rates on some items coupled with a lack of other work for agricultural contractors has exacerbated the situation.
10. Once a fraud had been detected by the MAFF investigation unit, and the case had been referred to the DPP, it would then be referred back to the RUC for further enquiries. It was agreed that a meeting involving DANI, the RUC, and the Department of the DPP should be arranged to consider how procedures in relation to payment of grant and follow up of fraud cases could be improved.

REGISTERED CLUBS - THE NEED FOR STRICT EXAMINATION OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

11. The RUC were concerned that a small number of registered clubs in the Belfast area were little more than drinking clubs which were operating as a source of finance for paramilitary organisations. Although there was a requirement in the legislation that a set of accounts should be inspected by DHSS, this did not provide adequate control. There may be scope for application of more stringent controls in the forthcoming liquor licensing legislation; in the meantime the RUC would identify the clubs which were the source of most concern to them and would ask DHSS to let them see their most recent accounts on a confidential basis.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

12. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would be making a statement on public expenditure on Thursday 17 November which would include a statement of the Northern Ireland public expenditure total for 1984/85. Thereafter DFP would put a paper to PCC proposing allocations within the Northern Ireland block. This would then be put to Ministers for approval,

with a view to an announcement of local decisions during December. The security aspects of the LOPS programme remain of course a very high priority within the Northern Ireland public expenditure block.

13. The Financial Management Initiative had received a lot of attention in recent months and had placed fresh emphasis on businesslike practice in financial management in government Departments. Each NI Department had prepared a timetable and work plan for the improvement of their financial systems, and much was being done to increase awareness of the importance of and the techniques of good financial management.
14. The RUC were aware of the continued pressures on public expenditure and were themselves making efforts to increase awareness of the importance of sound financial management.

DISINCENTIVES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

15. The IDB were concerned that the appearance of the Province remained a significant disincentive to potential investors. A number of companies had made it clear that even though Northern Ireland had been able to offer a superior financial package they had found some aspects of physical security measures in Northern Ireland, and the untidiness of parts of the Province, unacceptable, especially thinking of the impression that might be made on their own customers. The IDB were aware of the necessity of the security measures and that many other aspects of the problem fall to the community rather than Government Departments or the RUC: there was however some scope for improvement.
16. DOE were continuing in their efforts to improve housing sites, convert derelict sites and remove graffiti. Such activities were funded through the Environmental Improvement Scheme run by the Development Officer. Some DOE were also working closely with district councils who are also in a position to contribute some improvements. It was noted that the increase in private ownership of housing led directly to a reduction in graffiti and that physical security measures might appear more acceptable if the sites were well maintained and kept clean.

17. One particularly striking disincentive was the procedures at the Belfast Shuttle Terminal at Heathrow Airport: IDB and NIO were seeking improvements in procedures through the Department of Transport. The RUC agreed to take this up through their contacts in GB.

SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF REDEVELOPMENT

18. Close links exist between NIO, the RUC and the Department of the Environment in order to ensure that security considerations, the aspirations of the community and the plans of DOE were reconciled as far as possible. This enabled the RUC to point out difficulties they could identify arising from, for example, the social geography of certain areas, before plans reached too advanced a stage. This had been facilitated further by the recent re-organisation of the RUC.

REVITALISATION OF BELFAST CITY CENTRE

19. The introduction of late night shopping in Belfast City Centre, and the improvements in the Castle Street area were useful steps forward in the restoration of normality. DOE had adopted a targeted approach seeking to make some specific improvements, and wished to explore with the RUC the scope and potential pace of further relaxation of controls, without loss of security. The RUC recognised that there was scope for some flexibility in future security controls in the City Centre. NIO were also looking at the future of the Civilian Search Unit.

CONCLUSION

20. It was agreed that the meeting had been a useful exchange of information and views, and that a further meeting should be arranged in about 6 months' time. Once again careful preparation of the agenda would be very helpful.

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A G McCORMICK
PS/Sir Ewart Bell
1 December 1983