

From: Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP



Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

CONFIDENTIAL

6 December 1982

Thank you for your letter of 30 November about Enoch Powell's Private Member's Motion on Friday 10 December.

As Murdo MacLean told you, it would obviously be necessary to seek Jim Prior's advice on this and I enclose a copy of his Private Secretary's letter of 2 December which is, I think, self-explanatory and with which I agree.

I am sending a copy of this letter and the enclosure to John Biffen.

Ian Gow Esq MP  
Parliamentary Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street





Murdo MacLean Esq  
Government Whips Office  
House of Commons  
LONDON SW1

2nd December 1982

*1/11 plural my 2.12*

*Dear Murdo*

Thank you for your letter of 30 November about Mr Powell's Private Member's Motion for Friday 10 December. My Secretary of State has considered carefully whether the terms of the motion would be acceptable.

The motion looks on a quick reading to be one which the Government could accept, but it does in fact present serious difficulties. It is drafted against the background of a systematic campaign by Mr Powell asserting that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland is at present and has been the subject of plans, agreements, etc entered into between officials of HMG (perhaps without the knowledge of Ministers) and officials of the Government of the Republic - and, he has also implied, with the Government of the United States. The motion could therefore be represented as being necessary in order to bind HMG not to do the same thing again and presumably to abrogate the alleged agreements already existing. To some extent, by accepting the motion we can be held to recognise the necessity for it.

Secondly the link made between this second part of the motion, dealing with the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, and the first part about ending terrorism is at the least of doubtful validity. And in any case, no doubt deliberately, there is no mention of other factors, political and social, which can affect the fight against terrorism.

Thirdly, there has been at least one discussion with the Government of the Republic about the status of Northern Ireland (with Northern Ireland parties present) that at Sunningdale which resulted in an improvement in the attitude of that Government in relation to the status of Northern Ireland. In the Sunningdale communiqué it is recorded that

"the Irish Government fully accepted and solemnly declared that there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status."

This undertaking had never been made before. And it is not inconceivable that a change in the constitution of the Republic withdrawing the claim to sovereignty over the whole of Ireland,



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could provide the opportunity for discussions which could give further reassurance to unionists. And if there is ever a majority in Northern Ireland in favour of unification with the South we would have to have some kind of negotiations with Dublin.

Mr Prior does not think it would be wise to enter into any negotiations with Mr Powell about the terms of his motion; indeed the comments made above indicate that agreement could hardly be reached on acceptable changes within the existing framework.

Mr Prior recognises that if the Government benches do not support the motion Mr Powell will be likely to claim that this itself is evidence that undertakings already exist. Mr Prior will therefore be prepared to deal firmly with any such claims.

His advice is that Mr Powell should be thanked for his offer to discuss the wording of his motion but that we think it better that he should put it down and that the Government should state its position. Mr Prior thinks it highly desirable that the motion should be talked out.

*Yours ever,*

*John*

J M LYON

KW

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2a. PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS: 10 DECEMBER 1982

i. Northern Ireland - Mr J Enoch Powell (Official Unionist - Down, South)

1. The final terms of Mr Powell's Resolution are not known, but he has sought to discuss it with the Government to try to ensure that it will be in acceptable terms. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has said that he does not think it wise to enter into any negotiations with Mr Powell about the terms of his motion, and that agreement could hardly be reached on acceptable changes within the framework he has proposed. You may wish to ask the Northern Ireland Minister to explain the difficulties. Mr Prior thinks it highly desirable that the motion should be talked out. The Opposition spokesman, Mr Concannon, has apparently said that the Opposition Speaker in the debate, Mr Clive Soley, will be prepared to help talk it out. Is there any likelihood of the closure being moved successfully? If so, should arrangements be made to ensure that the motion is defeated? The Chief Whip will wish to comment.

~~ii. EC Finance for Declining Industrial Areas - Mr Anthony Steen (Conservative, Wavertree)~~

~~2. The Government broadly agrees with the motion - that <sup>there is a need to correct</sup> the agricultural imbalance in European Community expenditure - but has been able to make only slow progress towards persuading other Member States of the need. If the motion was to have been reached it could have been talked out sympathetically. The Foreign Office Minister might confirm that a Minister will stand by in case the Motion is reached.~~

~~iii. Commuter Clubs - Mr Richard Page (Conservative, Hertfordshire South West).~~

~~3. This motion will not be reached. The Transport Minister did not in any case want it debated, because it was likely to concentrate on possible irregularities in the running of two particular clubs.~~

Conclusion

4. The conclusion might be that arrangements should be made for Mr Powell's motion to occupy all the time available for Private Members' Motions on 10 December, and that it should be talked out without being allowed to reach a vote. On this basis, Mr Steen and Mr Page's motions will not be reached.

D H J Hilary

D H J HILARY

7 December 1982





Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

30th November 1982

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Chief Whip has received from Ian Gow.

I think that it will be for your Secretary of State to indicate whether the terms of the motion will be acceptable. Could you let me know when Mr Prior has had a chance to consider this.

(Murdo MacLean)

John Lyon Esq.,  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Northern Ireland Office  
SW1





10 DOWNING STREET

30th November 1982

*Thomson 1. 6.*  
*Shall all what I can*  
*do*  
*1.17.*  
*(note. I spoke to Ian Gow)*  
*h.*

*By the Michael,*

Private Members Motion - Friday 10th December

As you know, Enoch Powell has come top in the Ballot for the Debate on Friday 10th December.

The Order Paper shows that Enoch is - "to call attention to the situation in Northern Ireland; and to move a Resolution".

Enoch has in mind that the Debate should take place on the following Motion:-

"That in the opinion of this House, the efforts of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland, gratefully and appreciatively though these are recognised by this House, will not, of themselves, be sufficient to end terrorism and counter-terrorism, and restore tranquillity to the Province; and that that purpose will be more readily achieved when all concerned, both in the United Kingdom, and abroad, are convinced that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland will not be the subject of plans, agreements, bargains or understandings entered into between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of any other State or States."

It is Enoch's hope that the Motion which is to be debated on Friday week will be approved by the House.

For that reason, I am writing to you to ask whether the Motion in the terms set out above would be acceptable to the Government. If a motion in these terms would not be acceptable to the Government, then Enoch would consider, sympathetically, any suggested alterations to its terms, within the general ambit of the present wording.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Biffen.

*7 ed*

IAN GOW

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP  
cc. The Rt Hon John Biffen MP