



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Norther Ireland Committee - Thursday, 30th October, 1980.

1. I have reported to you verbally on last Thursday's meeting of this Committee, which discussed, exclusively, the decision to allow prisoners in Northern Ireland to wear civilian type clothes issued by the Prison Authorities (not all of those present had appreciated the distinction between prisoners wearing civilian type clothes issued by the Authorities.)

2. The Officers had seen Humphrey Atkins on 29th October and had not been convinced by H.A.'s arguments. The following spoke in critical terms about the decision:-

John Biggs-Davison
Michael Mates
Nigel Fisher ("I am shocked and appalled at this decision.")
Robert Atkins
Tony Marlow
Brian Mawhinney
Cyril Townsend (normally a leading dove).
Michael McNair Wilson
Ivor Stanbrook

3. H.A. is to address the full Committee on Thursday, 6th November. He will get a rough ride.

4. Generally, there is increasing anxiety about the prospects for any kind of political initiative in Northern Ireland. I had a talk with Carol Mather after last Thursday's Northern Ireland Committee. He shares the anxiety expressed by the Committee.

3rd November, 1980

Ian Gow.