

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

Cabinet began at 10.30 - four members were on holiday: Lord Hailsham, Mark Carlisle, Norman Fowler and Norman St. John-Stevas. Extra - the Solicitor General, Sir Ian Percival. The Prime Minister would be holding various meetings including one with the Foreign Secretary in Downing Street during the course of the day. Tonight she would fly to Manchester for a one-day tour of the North West.

IRELAND

We expected that we might be able to tell the Lobby something* - in the nature of a logical progression of events - after this morning's Cabinet.

- * Lobby told at 1240 that the Cabinet decided that it would be useful if the Prime Minister could meet the Taoiseach. Accordingly H.M. Ambassador in Dublin, Mr. Robin Haydon, had delivered a letter from Mrs. Thatcher to Mr. Lynch a short time ago suggesting that if he were coming to London for Lord Mountbatten's funeral it was her hope that a meeting could be arranged. If the idea were acceptable to Mr. Lynch, officials would sort out the details.

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PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

The morning briefing was repeated. The Prime Minister had a meeting at 4.00 with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State for Defence, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary.

Tomorrow the Prime Minister would make a tour of the North West. Details of it from Andy Wood who would be accompanying her.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Following Cabinet this morning it had been decided:-

1. that the British Ambassador in Dublin would deliver a letter from the Prime Minister to Mr. Lynch suggesting that it would be valuable if a meeting could be arranged if he were in London for Lord Mountbatten's funeral;
2. to increase the strength of the RUC by 1,000 to 7,500, the policy being that ultimately the RUC should have sole responsibility for law and order in Northern Ireland. Questions and details of the RUC increase should be made to the Northern Ireland Office.

There were no plans to increase troops but there was no weakening of resolve to keep troops in Northern Ireland. The increase in RUC should not be related to a possible decrease in troops.

There was no evidence that the powers of the RUC were to be increased.

We had not officially heard that Mr. Lynch had accepted the invitation to talks. However, it could be assumed that two areas that would be discussed during the talks were relations between the north and south and the longer term political solution for Northern Ireland. Recent events had made the latter more difficult to achieve.

It could be assumed that the Solicitor General had attended this morning's Cabinet because law and order and security were being discussed.

No guidance was given on the question of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

COUNTER-INFLATION POLICY UNIT

There was no question of ^a ~~the~~ Counter-Inflation Policy Unit being established, nor of the Government using paid advertising to promulgate its message of increased productivity being necessary to ensure services. The Paymaster General, who is charged with the co-ordination of Government information, had been asked by the Prime Minister to oversee Ministerial speeches on this subject, i.e. to inform him when they intend to make speeches.

SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY TOUR

It was not thought that the Government would renege on the Gleneagles Agreement, although it might interpret it slightly differently. No. 10 had asked for more details about the situation and would want these before making any comment. Hector Monro is understood to be having talks with the Foreign Office.

As a matter of principle, letters from PPSs normally reflect the Prime Minister's views.