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PRIME MINISTER

Stephen Boys-Smith, Principal Private Secretary in the Northern Ireland Office, telephoned this evening to report on today's meeting between Mr. Alison and the Irish Commission.

The meeting lasted about 8 hours but unfortunately no real progress has been made. The main topic for discussion was the clothing aspect. The subject was "talked round" at great length with Mr. Alison stressing the Government's position as stated in Mr. Atkins' statement.

The problem as to what was regarded as duress by the Government was broached - with the hunger strike ended would the Government still consider itself under duress?

The Commission, at the moment, are not going to visit the prison.

A full record of the meeting will be sent early next week.

D. St. Collins

DUTY CLERK

3 July 1981

Told NIO that PM approves.

MA 3/11

The Minister of State in the NIO, Mr. Michael Alison M.P., today again met members of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace.

The Commission requested permission to visit HM Prison Maze and the Minister of State readily agreed that they could visit the prisoners refusing food, there being a clear understanding by both sides that there could be no negotiation.

The Minister again emphasised the policy of the Government in relation to the prisoners five demands, as set out in the Secretary of State's statement of 30 June, and expressed the hope that the Commission would in turn explain its significance to those on hunger strike.

The Minister welcomed the statement by the conference of Irish bishops which had called for an end to the hunger strike. He explained that if, within a humane and enlightened regime there was any ground for complaint, the avenue of proceeding through the European Commission of Human Rights remained open and asked the ICJP to persuade the hunger strikers to use it.

The Minister welcomed the acceptance by the ICJP of the principle that the Governors and prison authorities are and must remain in control of the prison regime.

DICTATED BY MIKE HOPKINS, NIO
3 July 1981

*Agreed
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