

EVENTS IN THE HOUSE

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The announcement of the guillotine on the Nationality Bill passed off extremely quietly. John Silkin, speaking for the record, described the move as "an absolute scandal", and there was token opposition from the Labour backbenchers. Roy Hattersley said that the only reason for making the announcement today rather than before Easter was to give time for you to complete your visit to India and get back safely.

Mr. Pym dealt with all of this without difficulty. He said that Ministers had not decided until last week to bring forward the guillotine motion, and that there would be an opportunity to debate the other points raised on Wednesday.

As these things go, there could not have been less opposition to the guillotine, and there was no real feeling about it.

Ian Paisley: SO9

E || Ian Paisley moved an SO9 debate on the worsening security situation in Northern Ireland. He said that he would have expected the Government voluntarily to come forward with a Statement today. He said that the IRA, armed with machine guns, had blocked a road in Northern Ireland, and that RUC vehicles had been diverted to avoid another road block in his own constituency. He said that Marian Price had been carrying out Republican activities since her release and that this put a question mark over the release of Dolours Price. Further, he said that two Protestants had been brutally murdered during the Easter Recess. Everyone was now talking about the choice facing Bobby Sands; these two and their families had not been presented with the choice of living or dying.

As expected, the Speaker turned Mr. Paisley's application down. The House was very empty, but there were some mutterings of support for him from the Government backbenchers.