

Prime Minister

1. I have spoken to JEP on the telephone this morning. He will come in (via the Cabinet Office) at 11.10 a.m. on Tuesday, 17th November.
2. John Brookborough telephoned from Northern Ireland this morning.
3. He and James Moyola (Chichester-Clark) are going to see Jim in Belfast early on Wednesday morning. John Brookborough says that "the whole place is a tinder box". He says that we must stop talking about "a political solution"; to the Protestant and to the Roman Catholic communities alike. These words mean one thing only, namely incorporation into the Republic.
4. John Brookborough said that as many as 40% of the adult Roman Catholic population did not want union with the Republic anyway.
5. John Brookborough had read the Reports of the Joint Studies. He said that they all gave him the impression that the studies would be interpreted by all Unionists as being the precursor to a sell out. He knew that that was not the case. However, the key element in influencing Unionists opinion was not the truth, but that which was perceived by people in Northern Ireland as being the truth. He said that a widespread impression had been created in Northern Ireland that the UK Government no longer really believed in the union and that this was the major contributory factor which lay behind his words that "the whole place is a tinder box".
6. John Brookborough said he would give me a ring after he and James Moyola had seen Jim Prior on Wednesday morning.

16th November 1981

IAN GOW