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GRS 300

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FROM PORT STANLEY 241330Z FEB 83

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 138 OF 24 FEBRUARY

VISIT OF DEFENCE SELECT COMMITTEE

1. THE DEFENCE SELECT COMMITTEE UNDERSTANDABLY MADE VERY MUCH LESS OF AN IMPACT ON VTHE CIVIL POPULATION THAN THE FAC. THE DSC WERE HERE PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS DEFENCE WITH THE MILITARY AND MET RELATIVELY FEW ISLANDERS.
2. THERE WAS A PUBLIC SESSION IN THE TOWN HALL LASTING ONE HOUR TWENTY MINUTES DURING WHICH TIME THE COMMITTEE EAAMINED SEVEN CIVILIAN WITNESSES: SYD MILLER, TERRY SPRUCE, GRAHAM BOUND, GERALD CHEEK, BILL GOSS(ALL OF WHOM HAD APPEARED BEFORE THE FAC) AND MR AND MRS R BUCKETT(PLANT AND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY MANAGER AND SOCIAL WORKER RESPECTIVELY). THE LINE OF QUESTIONING WAS NOT AGGRESSIVE: THEY ASKED ABOUT MILITARY/CIVIL RELATIONS, LOCAL PREFERENCE FOR THE LOCATION OF A NEW AIRFIELD AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES CREATED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE GARRISON. THE WITNESSES SAID THAT RELATIONS WITH THE MILITARY WERE IN THE MAIN EXCELLENT, THOUGH A FEW TENSIONS WERE BOUND TO ARISE FROM TIME TO TIME AND THAT MOST ISLANDERS WOULD PREFER THE NEW AIRFIELD TO BE AT MARCH RIDGE (WITH AN ALL WEATHER ROAD TO STANLEY).
3. ON THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICING THE GARRISON, THE COMMITTEE GAVE THE APPEARANCE OF NOT HAVING BEEN BRIEFED, THOUGH I UNDERSTAND THAT IN FACT THEY WERE. THE QUESTION WAS PUT TO SPRUCE OF FICO,

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WHO HAVE MADE NO PLANS IN THIS REGARD, AND THE COMMITTEE MAY WELL HAVE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT NOTHING WAS HAPPENING ON THAT FRONT. HOWEVER, THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER IS ACTIVELY PURSUING THIS MATTER WITH THE MILITARY, LOCAL PARTIES AND POTENTIAL IMMIGRANTS.

4. ALL IN ALL I THINK IT FAIR TO SAY THAT THE EFFECT OF THE VISIT ON ISLANDER OPINION WAS MINIMAL.

HUNT

**THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED**

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