

CARRON

nr



10 DOWNING STREET

Mr Gov

Mr. RICKETT

many thanks.  
I have noted your  
wise words.

wn

1. ? AFTER TO THE 1/9

LAST SENTENCE OF

YOUR MOST DATED

25<sup>th</sup> August.

2. Mr. CARRON IS "TECHNICALLY

AN A.P." — FROM THE

MOMENT OF THE

DECLARATION OF THE

RESULT UNTIL DEATH,

EXPULSION OR RESIGNATION.

1/9/1981

PRIME MINISTER

cc:- Mr Pattison  
Mr Gow ✓  
Mr Gaffin

I attach the NIO's draft reply to Mr Carron. I do not think we need take any instant decision on this since we can telex it to Carron tomorrow afternoon or evening. There are three points you may wish to consider:-

(a) The NIO feel that on balance we should not admit Mr Morrison, Carron's Press Secretary to the meeting. He is a well known member of the Provisional Sinn Fein. But both Press Office and I think you should not involve yourself in this argument. If you did, it would provoke further dispute about who you are and are not willing to see. It is to be Mr Alison's meeting. He should decide who to see. I therefore think that the last sentence of paragraph 2 should be deleted.

(b) Mr Carron's telegram to you refers to the "critical situation" in the Maze. You may therefore feel more should be said in the draft reply to state HMG's position. The danger is that this would increase the chances of substantive correspondence between you and Carron. It would probably also be interpreted as meaning that we see little point in a meeting with Carron. I am inclined to suggest that the point made in the first paragraph is sufficient. The Government's position should be well understood. Press Office can always draw on the standard briefing as background to your letter, if necessary.

(c) Press Office would find it helpful if the text could be released to the press. If you agree, I think this strengthens the arguments for not including any mention of Morrison. We would need to add a sentence to the letter warning Carron that it was being released to the press.

Finally, I should add that NIO remain of the view that we must offer a Ministerial meeting to Carron. We say in the letter that we feel problems in Northern Ireland should be solved through democratic channels. NIO therefore feel we would lose the propaganda battle if we refused to grant a meeting to an elected representative, even if he is not technically an MP.

W. F. S. RICKETT

25 August, 1981

DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To

Owen Carron Esq MP  
23 Water Street  
Enniskillen  
CO FERMANAGH  
Northern Ireland

(Full Postal Address)

Enclosures

Copies to be sent to

(Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PRIME MINISTER  
(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your telegram seeking an urgent meeting to discuss the situation in the Northern Ireland prisons. I am glad that as a democratically elected representative of electors in Northern Ireland, you are pursuing these difficult problems through the democratic channels. This is the only way in which these matters can be addressed and I hope that, now that you are elected, you will join the many others who condemn violence and confrontation.

In view of your desire for an urgent meeting I must ask you, as I so often ask MPs, to approach the Departmental Minister concerned, at least in the first instance. Mr Atkins is himself away on holiday, but his deputy Mr Alison would be ready to make an early appointment to see you; his office will be making contact with you for this purpose. However, I do not consider that it would be appropriate for Mr Morrison to attend this meeting.

.../

Mr Alison will of course furnish me, and Mr Atkins on his return, with a full account of the meeting. I know that he would find it helpful if you could let him have, as a basis for the meeting, a note in advance of the points that you wish to discuss.