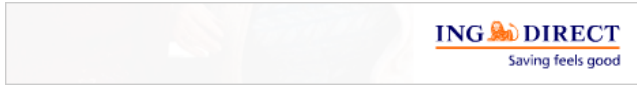




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## Bradley and Eames to release report on policing the past

By Sam Lister  
Tuesday, 6 January 2009

THE government is to be quizzed on the cost of policing the past in a debate secured by an influential group of MPs.

Last year the Northern Ireland Affairs committee made a series of recommendations about how money and resources were being used in historical inquiries.

Next week, when MPs return from the three week Christmas recess, the government will face an afternoon of questioning on what progress is being made, particularly on how to stem the flow of cash into the statutory inquiries such as Bloody Sunday.



Denis Bradley and Lord Eames release their report this month

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In its annual report, published yesterday, the Northern Ireland committee states: "We sought to find out where resources were being diverted from crime prevention, investigation or prosecution by the need to service historical inquiries, and whether any of the various bodies active in investigating incidents that took place in the past – in some cases 40 years ago – were duplicating each other's work or making overlapping or competing demands on the PSNI and other agencies.

"We also sought to discover whether an apparent trend for inquiries to identify covert human sources of intelligence – to allow reference to information that might allow people to identify them – might threaten the safety of informers, past or present.

"The Government's response was generally very positive but did not in every case provide a full answer to our recommendations. We have therefore sought a debate in the House on our report.

"We may seek to contribute further to developments in this respect once the final report of the Consultative Group has been published."

When the committee published its findings last year it criticised the system that means all cases were automatically reviewed by the Historical Enquiries Team and concluded that scarce resources were being used to investigate historic cases where there was little likelihood of helping a family and limited opportunity of securing a conviction.

It called for alternative ways of prioritising cases to focus on cases in which families of victims have requested an investigation.

MPs also found the extension of the Ombudsman's remit to include historic cases was having "a damaging effect on the efficiency of that Office".

It also proposed that the Northern Ireland Office took further steps to control the high costs of statutory inquiries and that inquiries other than those already under way or announced should be established only if agreed by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The committee met the Consultative Group on the Past but held back on making some recommendations in its report to ensure it did not pre-empt the findings of co-chairmen Lord Eames and Denis Bradley.

Last night it emerged that the Eames Bradley report will be published on January 28.

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