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Seol aon fhreagra chun :—
(Address any reply to :—)

AN RUNAI
(The Secretary)

faoin uimhir seo :—
(quoting :—)



AN ROINN SHÓTAÍ EACTRAÇA
Department of External Affairs

DAILE ÁTA CLIAË, 2.
Dublin, 2.

Taoiseach 29/9
[Signature]

28 September 1970

Dear Dan

I enclose herewith a copy of a report of a meeting with some members of the Central Citizens Defence Committee, Belfast. I wish to draw attention to item (v) which is a partial answer to the suggestion made to the Taoiseach by Mr. Conaty and Fr. Murphy some time ago.

If the Taoiseach approves the idea in principle it could be left to us to negotiate the details.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Gallivan

D. O'Sullivan Esq.
Assistant Secretary
Department of the Taoiseach
Dublin 2.

SECRET

Several people from the Central Citizens Defence Committee, Belfast were in Dublin on Thursday afternoon (24th) to launch the booklet "Law(?) and Orders". I invited them to meet me in order to have a general conversation at this point in time on several subjects. Mr. Small accompanied me. The visitors were Mr. Paddy Devlin M.P., Very Rev. Fr. Padraig Murphy and his assistant Fr. Toner, Mr. Tom Conaty, Mr. Largey and another member of the Committee.

The main subjects discussed were the following:

- (i) the booklet itself. On this we expressed the opinion that the tone of the booklet was unfortunate. The facts in the Falls Road case were a sufficient indictment in themselves and adding emotion to them damaged rather than helped the case. All those present agreed with this assessment although there was an obvious reluctance to be too critical of the author, Seán Óg Ó Fearghail, who is in fact Mr. Michael Dolly. (His contribution of a foreward under his own name was intended to give the impression that he had not written the whole booklet);
- (ii) we enquired as to whether a report would be published on the events in the area of St. Matthew's Catholic Church on the weekend before the Falls Road "curfew" during which three Protestants and one Catholic lost their lives. It seems that a report on this was prepared and copies were given to the Cardinal and Mr. Burroughs some weeks ago but that no further action has been taken on it. We may be able to obtain a copy. Our basic interest in this matter derives from the assessment we made in July that the St. Matthew's Church incident is the key to what happened on the Falls Road a week later. It still remains important, in our opinion, to obtain the full facts on that incident for future reference;
- (iii) the opinion was expressed by the Belfast people that the premature retirement of General Freeland was largely brought about by his handling of the situation in East Belfast and the Lower Falls Road at end June/beginning July. There is no doubt at all about the genuine shock felt in the Lower Falls Road by the "curfew" and attendant circumstances. Relations between the people and the British Army in the area up to that time had been quite satisfactory. In connection with our criticisms of the tone of the booklet the question was raised as to whether we would buy some copies. In order to show our interest in the matter we agreed to recommend the purchase of 500 copies for appropriate distribution. In the particular case of this booklet the sales will be such as to pay for the cost of production and probably leave something over for the legal defence of people caught in the "curfew". It is proposed to fight these cases all the way through the courts as there is good reason to believe that the "curfew" was illegal;
- (iv) we were told that Independent Distributors Ltd., which is owned by Independent Newspapers Ltd., had refused to handle the booklet. The Belfast group are considering their attitude in relation to Independent Newspapers Ltd. arising out of this unexpected refusal;

I have conveyed
to Mr. Gallagher the
Taoiseach's decision
that there should be no
involvement or control from
here in relation to the
content of the new book or books
but that it should be entrusted
to Mr. Murphy that if the
book or books were considered
suitable for circulation by us,
a good number of volumes
would be purchased by
D/E.A. 29/9/70

- (v) the subject was raised of unequal treatment by the police as between the Catholic and Protestant communities and similar alleged inequalities of treatment in the Magistrates Courts. On this we suggested that proper studies be made by qualified people in an utterly clinical and unemotional way. Such studies should be published and submitted to, among others, the British National Council of Civil Liberties. We were asked if we would finance this. In reply, bearing in mind the proposal made by Fr. Murphy and Mr. Conaty to the Taoiseach some time ago, we indicated that we would consider purchasing a sufficient number of copies of such publications as would go a reasonable distance to paying for their actual cost. We recommend that this proposal be seriously considered and that we be authorised to negotiate on the matter with this in mind. This would answer substantially the proposal put to the Taoiseach by Fr. Murphy and Mr. Conaty and we would have control of the kind of material published. It is a practical suggestion and a method of helping the minority in the North without appearing to intervene unduly in the situation;
- (vi) I had a few private words with Paddy Devlin in regard to the Social Democratic and Labour Party. He told me, without prompting, that the visit by Gerry Fitt and himself to Dublin to see members of the Irish Labour Party had been designed to keep certain nationalists out of the new party e.g. Mr. Roderick O'Connor M.P. (This confirms what Hume told me earlier). He is not keen on Eddie McAteer either. He said that James Doherty, Chairman of the Nationalist Party, is in favour of the new party and obviously Mr. Devlin has no strong objection to adherence by people like Mr. Doherty. He regards the ploy as having been successful but does not intend to establish any formal link with the Irish Labour Party. Their connection would be confined to fraternal visits and the like. On this subject I said that, in my personal opinion, it would be unwise for the SDLP to do other than create friendly relations with the Government of the day in Dublin. Mr. Devlin had been to see Bernadette Devlin two weeks ago and asked her about her attitude to the SDLP. She did not rebuff him but said that she would not make up her mind about her attitude for six months (some time ago Mr. Frank McManus M.P. said exactly the same thing);
- (vii) the group are not happy about the replacement of Sir Arthur Young by a serving senior officer of the RUC. Their view is that, in the absence of an outsider breathing down their necks, the RUC will revert to its accustomed role of protecting Unionism rather than impartially serving the community as a whole. The group mentioned several indications of RUC partiality including doctored evidence to the Scarman tribunal. Clearly they have no confidence in an RUC whose chief officers can be brought under local pressure;
- (viii) there is equally little confidence in the minority representatives on the police authority. We suggested that, as a matter of ordinary practice, the Opposition political leadership should keep in constant touch with minority representatives on authorities of all kinds so as to be able to bring influence to bear on them to counteract the obvious pressures exercised by the majority on the authorities. We mentioned the possibility that if minority representatives on the police authority had been adamant about replacing Sir Arthur Young from outside it would have been extremely difficult and probably impossible to ignore their views. In current circumstances the minority representatives have in fact a blocking role if they care to exercise it and do so with intelligence.

EG. 28.9.70