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Department of the Environment (NI)
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12 April 1984

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

The Committee have begun their consideration of the complaint referred to them on 14 March about the conduct of Mr Gregory Campbell on 8 March at the hearing by the Department of the Environment Committee into the Londonderry change of council name application.

The Committee have instructed me to invite you to send them any comments you may wish to make regarding the enclosed brief statement prepared by me and agreed by Mr Campbell and Mr Robinson.

I should be grateful if you could let me have a reply by the end of the month so that it can be distributed to the Committee before their meeting on 2 May.

If there are procedural aspects of the Committee's activities on which you would like to consult me or the Chairman (Dr Paisley), please do not hesitate to ask us.

J A D KENNEDY

MEMORANDUM BY THE CLERK TO THE ASSEMBLY

Incident involving Mr Gregory Campbell at the hearing on 8 March 1984 by the Environment Committee on the Change of District name (Londonderry) Order (NI) 1984

1. On the morning of Thursday 8 March 1984, I was present in the Old Senate Chamber at the hearing by the Department of the Environment Statutory Committee into the Local Government Change of District Name (Londonderry) Order (Northern Ireland) 1984. Mr Chris Patten MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office, had been invited to appear before the Committee at 11.30 am. The start of the meeting was delayed, however, for some 20 minutes until the arrival of the Chairman, Mr Peter Robinson MP, who had been to the funeral service of his constituent, Mr William McConnell, Assistant Governor, HM Prison, The Maze, murdered earlier in the week by the Provisional IRA.
2. Because more visitors than usual were expected, arrangements were made to accommodate any overflow in the upstairs gallery as well as in the galleries underneath. In the event between 15 and 20 people occupied the top balcony. Among them was Mr Gregory Lloyd Campbell, DUP Member for Londonderry. He was sitting in the front row, flanked by another Assemblyman and a stranger.
3. Just before noon, as Mr Patten was coming to the end of an introductory statement giving the Government's reasons for approving the application of Londonderry City Council to have the name of the District changed from Londonderry to Derry, Mr Campbell rose to his feet and shouted among other things that the Minister was a traitor and a rebel from England who had deserted the cause of Ulster. He then flung what appeared to be a cloth in the direction of Mr Patten. Subsequently, this object came into my possession and I, therefore, now know that it was a makeshift Irish Republican tricolour flag.

4. Immediately the demonstration occurred the Chairman (Mr Robinson) began calling 'Order' and said:

"I have to ask the gentleman to leave the Gallery. Will the gentleman leave the Gallery, please."

Mr Campbell left the public gallery as soon as he had been requested to do so by the Chairman who then warned the public in the following terms -

"I think I should say at this stage that this Committee has an important task to do; it has not much time to do that task because of the constraints of Statutory Rules, and the Committee can if necessary consider this matter in camera. I would ask members of the Committee and members of the public to please allow us to conduct this meeting so that we can ask the questions and then come to a decision."

Minutes of evidence page 3 (Consideration of Statutory Rule: Local Government change of District Name (Londonderry) Order (NI) 1984). (Report NIA 133)

5. There was no further interruption from the galleries during the remainder of the morning's hearing.

J A D KENNEDY
11 April 1984