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Memo.

Deputy P. Hogan (South Tipperary), Chairman, accompanied by Mr. Tobin, Secretary of the Public Accounts Committee, called this morning at 10.30 a. m. by appointment.

Deputy Hogan produced to me a letter signed by Lieut. -General McEoin, Chief of Staff, to the effect that the directive of February, 1969, from the Minister for Defence contained no authorisation whatever for the purchase or importation of arms.

He said the Committee would like to see a copy of the directive. They would like to be in a position to refute allegations by Captain Kelly that the directive gave him authority for everything he did in relation to importation of arms. He had not been a cooperative witness; indeed he had been provocative and the "members of the Committee were provoked".

I told Deputy Hogan that the directive was a verbal one and as interpreted by the Chief of Staff he wrote it out; that the directive was given in order to ensure a degree of preparedness of the Defence forces in the event of the 'Forces of Law and Order' in the North being unable or unwilling to protect the community if they were attacked by hostile groups such as the U. V. F. who were, as far as we knew, well armed. The purpose would be mercy missions but no action would be taken without a Government decision.

As the Chief of Staff ~~if~~ indicated, there was no authorisation or even suggestion that arms would be purchased by anyone. The Chief of Staff's memo of the Directive was highly confidential and in the nature of a 'Top Secret' document. Because of security considerations and official secrets obligations, I felt that it would create a wrong precedent to make it available for inspection to the Committee.

Such a document would not be made available to the Dáil. Even though

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it would establish that no authorisation was given in it to Captain Kelly to purchase arms or to do anything else - as he had claimed - the Government felt that the precedent should not be created.

I assured Surgeon Hogan that the Government wished to be as cooperative as possible but I hoped he understood our position. He said he was very appreciative of the cooperation given by the Department of Finance.



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