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Dear Private Secretary

As you are aware representations have been made with increasing frequency to the Taoiseach and to the Minister about individual internees. So far the policy has been not to take any specific action in individual cases for the following reasons:

(1) as far as we know practically all internees are Irish citizens and it would not be right to differentiate between them and, in particular, to distinguish between 26-county and 6-county residents;

(2) it would be clearly unfair to take action only in relation to cases where the detainee happened to have the contacts and ability to use the channels of protest; and

(3) to make representations in some cases could be taken as implying that we thought internment might be justified in other cases.

For these reasons the view here is that we should continue to attack the policy of internment on the broad front and not make representations in individual cases. The Minister suggests that if the Taoiseach agrees with this view he might consider letting the basis of this policy be known.

Yours sincerely

H. J. O'Dowd, Esq.
Private Secretary to the Taoiseach
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16 Samhain 1971