CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT STORMONT CASTLE ON THURSDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 1968, AT 11.15 A.M.

PRESENT:-- The Prime Minister
The Minister of Commerce
The Minister of Finance
The Minister of Home Affairs
The Minister of Health and Social Services
The Minister of Education
The Minister of Agriculture
The Minister of Development
The Minister in the Senate

ALSO PRESENT:-- The Attorney-General (for Items 1, 2 and 3)
The Chief Whip

The Secretary to the Cabinet
The Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet
The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

Mr. J.E. Greeves
The Inspector General, R.U.C.
Mr. J.G. Hill
The Deputy Inspector General, R.U.C.

1. SECURITY SITUATION

The Deputy Inspector General presented a Police analysis of the present situation and Ministers gave special attention to some particular features which emerged, notably the people and parties who were infiltrating and increasingly motivating the Civil Rights movement; the need to re-assure moderate Unionists that the Government had the situation well in hand; and the special measures required to enable the Police to exercise more effective control.

It was agreed:

(a) that the Reserve Force should be increased by a further two platoons (in addition to the one extra platoon already formed) and that special training in riot control drill would be given;

(b) that sufficient additional Land-Rovers should be provided as a matter of urgency to give the police a greater degree of mobility - a requirement of 50 was estimated of which 20 had already been ordered;

/(c) that a
(c) that a Police Public Relations Officer (with necessary supporting staff) should be appointed to deal with the Press and Television media and perhaps also to include police welfare functions within his duties;

(d) that the existing rule requiring all police comment on incidents to be made from Headquarters should be strictly enforced; and

(e) that a statement should be issued by the Minister of Home Affairs on the steps being taken to strengthen the police force, including reference to the mobilisation of members of the B Special Constabulary agreed at the meeting on 28th November, 1968.

2. REPLY TO MR. HAROLD WILSON'S LETTER OF 19TH NOVEMBER, 1968, ON MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE DOWNING STREET MEETING ON 4TH NOVEMBER, 1968.

The draft reply circulated to Ministers was approved, subject to certain amendments.

3. REPLY TO MR. HAROLD WILSON'S LETTER OF 14TH NOVEMBER, 1968, ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Some amendments were made in the draft reply circulated to Ministers which, subject to these, was approved.

The Minister of Home Affairs argued that in the third paragraph after the reference to Mr. Attlee's pledge of 28th October, 1948, about no change taking place in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland without Northern Ireland's free agreement, the point should be made that any question of a change in this pledge would be vigorously opposed. It was, however, felt that it would be better to make a point of this kind informally through the Home Office.

4. AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY (LOAN) BILL

Approved.

5. QUEEN'S SPEECH - MOVERS AND SECONDERS

The Cabinet agreed that the following should move and second the Addresses:

In the Senate:- Senator J.E.N. Barnhill to move, Senator D. McClelland to second.

In the Commons:- Mr. J.D. Taylor to move, Mr. W. Scott to second.
6. VISITS ABROAD

There being no comments by Ministers the visit notified by the Secretary to the Cabinet's Memorandum of the 28th November, 1968, was approved.

[T. O'Neill]