



# PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MAJOR J.D. CHICHESTER-CLARK,  
AT PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE CAMERON REPORT  
ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1969.

The Cameron Report is a document of great importance. But far more important is how we respond to it. Various interests can, if they wish, rake through this lengthy report to find more fuel for the fire of controversy they seek to keep ablaze. If that is their approach, there is nothing we can do to stop them. What we can do, as a Government, is to give a lead to public opinion through what we do ourselves.

We do not fear the truth. Indeed, our search for it by no means ends with the publication of this Report. It is self-evident that in the past all of us have made mistakes. What do we do now:- profit from these mistakes, or sink into a welter of recriminations which ensures that they will be repeated? It is our hope that people will consider Lord Cameron's Report as a whole, and ask themselves "How can I by my personal example or by using any shred of personal influence I may possess help to remove the distrust and suspicion which poison our society: how can I ensure that such things as Lord Cameron was inquiring into do not happen again?"

I hope that responsible media of information - newspapers, radio and television - will also tackle the very important task of presenting this complex and detailed Report with a sense of that balance which Lord Cameron and his colleagues displayed. For if a Report, such as this, is to realise its great potential value, it must be accepted as fair by the great majority on all sides of our political arguments, many of whom will have its findings presented only at second hand.

We have published with the Report itself a Commentary prepared by the Government. This is in no way intended to obscure or cloud the issue. We have to realise that events move very rapidly, and the Cameron Report must therefore be seen in the whole context of events in Northern Ireland since last October. I hope the Commentary will be studied also with care. In it we have sought to show in particular how we have striven to set aside such feelings of fear and injustice as may have existed, and how we for our part propose to put right the wrongs which Lord Cameron records.

As I said after the Home Secretary's visit, let us look to the future. If the Cameron Report becomes just another report for the archives, the labour of the Commission will have been lost. We must not allow that to happen. Where there was fear let us build trust; where there was prejudice let us create understanding. We are all, on every side, sick of strife, weary of destruction. I ask all men of goodwill to consider the course to which this Government is now firmly and irreversibly committed, and ask themselves why there should be further dissension.

A few short months ago we had confidence in the future prosperity of Ulster - in its rapid progress towards our goal of a decent job for every man, a good home for every family, the best available education for every child. None of these points of progress can grow behind the barricades. May they soon come down in every part of Ulster, so that decent, normal life may once again be resumed in our streets. If the barricades remain, only weeds will grow - unemployment, poverty, backwardness, despair. The lesson of these grim months is clear. Cameron has merely underlined it. Let's learn that lesson, and with it learn to hope again.