

IN CONFIDENCE

31st August, 1970.

Since our talk on the possibilities for the selection of my successor as Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary I have given further consideration to this subject. At the Prime Minister's request I have also had discussions with him. I think it is necessary that I should set out my own views and at the same time refer to the possibilities which have been canvassed.

I very much hope that I shall be able to return to the City of London on the 1st of April next. My justification for selecting this date is that so far as my own responsibilities are involved the Hunt recommendations are already implemented and that by next April I trust a necessary degree of consolidation and development of the force will have taken place.

The G.O.C. and I are the two key factors in the important responsibility of keeping the peace. I recommend that there should be at least a three months' overlap between the departure of either of us and the arrival of the others successor. If I am correct in assuming that the G.O.C. may leave at the end of February and if I am to go at the end of March I consider that the overlap of one month would be too short. If the new G.O.C. could be in post at the beginning of January I would be prepared to remain until the end of March. The importance of this overlap is emphasised by the efforts which I am making to convince the military authorities that the initiative for keeping the peace must progressively pass to the police and that the Army can be more effective by contributing manpower rather than armed force.

In the matter of the appointment of the next Chief Constable there are three possibilities to consider. Firstly, that I should be succeeded by an officer from another force in the United Kingdom. The considerations here are relatively simple. I know of no one who has the necessary qualifications who would be willing to come. The discouragements are all too obvious. The political complexities are such that it is often impossible for the chief officer to decide which is the right course of action or in which direction his duty lies. Powerful political

considerations which cannot be ignored intrude into every aspect of police activity from parades, prosecutions and promotions to hours of duty, transfers and even Police Orders. It is not enough to be a competent commander. One is in an environment in which previous United Kingdom experience is an uncertain guide and in which the clamours of public criticism are rarely silent, and in which success can only be measured with certainty in the terms of sustained effort.

I am doubtful if another Englishman would be acceptable, either by politicians or by the members of the force. My own situation has often been precarious on this account. Once when I had been in conflict with a body of members of the force I enquired what I had done wrong. A senior officer replied, "Nothing, but you are an Englishman."

Furthermore, on the matter of salary, the present scale which the Government has conceded is not likely to attract a Chief Constable from the United Kingdom. I mention this aspect because it is of greater importance than the amount of the salary involved. It indicates the responsibility and status of the appointment as well as the assessment by the Government of the importance of the chief officer of police. Fortunately I am not personally involved since I receive no salary in Northern Ireland. The subject, however, is to be a matter for negotiation at the Police Council.

Secondly, a Chief Constable could be selected from a former member of the armed services. Elsewhere in the United Kingdom this practice is no longer followed since such officers do not possess the essential knowledge or experience of the complexities of police affairs, and also because such an appointment would be regarded as derogatory to the service as it would indicate that the police cannot produce their own officers. I believe the appointment of such a kind in Northern Ireland, even assuming that the individual was an officer of already high distinction, would be regarded as an affront to the dignity of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. If he were an Englishman may God help him for he would be wise to spend considerable time on his knees in the hope of Divine support which he would find conspicuously lacking elsewhere.

There is, however, a much greater reason for rejecting such a man as Chief Constable. The needs of this force are for progressively improving professional standards. For far too long we have been cut off from the steady developments which the police have made elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I believe that it will take at least ten years before we reach standards that compare with the best elsewhere. We must no longer judge ourselves by our own performances. The chief officer must be able to assess the force objectively and to know from previous police experience what is wanted and especially what is attainable. Without experience he would have to rely too much upon the opinion of others. He would find no shortage of advice. Unhappily, it would be self-contradictory and rarely impartial. Furthermore, there is the danger that experience in the armed services would influence a chief officer in the direction of military methods of peace-keeping which are not those which the police can afford to adopt in their long-term responsibility of winning the confidence of the public.

A Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary for years to come should set a standard and fix an objective, or rather a series of objectives, for the force to reach. He should impart a doctrine to influence the Government, the Police Authority, the members of the force and the public, all of whom have much to learn on the subject of police service and its relationship with the public. No one without police experience could possibly do this.

Thirdly, there remains the possibility of an appointment from within the force. Here we are on practical grounds. The present deputy, Graham Shillington, has much to offer as a chief officer for a period of say from two to three years. He is an officer of the highest integrity with a vast knowledge of the officers of the force and one who is universally esteemed and respected by them. This relation is always necessary for efficient command. Here it is vital, and without it little can be achieved. No one is more dedicated to the Hunt proposals and no one has greater reason or experience to appreciate their necessity. I think he is a different man from a year ago. He can be firm and decisive and he remains cool under pressure. He sees the need for positive leadership and he is convinced that it produces the required results. Much could be done to support his command.

The choice of his deputy is obvious. It should be Harry Baillie, now an Assistant Chief Constable, who has a progressively increasing potential for command and who has a quiet confidence in himself which has convinced both police and Army commanders of the wisdom of taking his advice in critical situations.

The practice which I have exploited here in attaching a senior police officer to assist the development of the force in a specialised way is one which should continue and which would be of equally great assistance in future.

Mr. Boyes the Assistant Chief Constable of Mid-Anglia was here for six months to assess the establishment and to recommend a divisional structure. At present we have Commander Remnant of the Metropolitan Police for a similar period to act as consultant to Divisional Commanders, in addition to undertaking many other tasks to our advantage.

There should be no difficulty in arranging a succession of such attachments since a married officer is content to come to Northern Ireland without his family for a limited period. Incidentally, I do not think such officers would be willing to come to assist a non-professional chief officer. Other attachments at lower levels of command have been of great help and I intend to continue to take further advantage of them. Shillington will be further supported by visits from an Inspector of Constabulary as recommended by Hunt. This would assure him of the continuous availability of help from the United Kingdom, and provide him a channel by which he could obtain it.

To conclude, I consider that the third course is the correct one to entertain and that it can be accepted with confidence upon its own merits even though there appears to be no practical alternative.

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