

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF A CONVERSATION WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD WITH THE HOME SECRETARY ON TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 1970

The Prime Minister said that he had discussed with the Chief Constable the various proposals concerning the Deputy Chief Constable. Sir Arthur Young was very much against the proposition that there should be only one Deputy who would be an Englishman, but he had expressed favourable reaction to the proposal that there might be two Deputies, one of whom would be an Englishman. The Prime Minister said that he had also put the various proposals to the Cabinet, who were absolutely adamant that neither a single English Deputy nor two Deputies, one of whom would be an Englishman, was acceptable. The Cabinet felt that it would be considered as nothing more than a gimmick and seriously detract from the merit of the appointment of the new Chief Constable. They also stressed that the morale of the RUC would suffer as it would be argued that there were insufficient men of the right calibre already in the Force to fill the top posts. The Cabinet had concluded that the solution which they would wish to support was that there should be only one Deputy, who must be an Ulsterman, and it appeared to them that one of the Assistant Chief Constables, who was a Catholic, was suitably qualified in every way.

The Home Secretary asked whether a suitable man was available but said that he would like to consider the proposal further. The Prime Minister said that Mr Flanagan was very highly regarded in Police circles. The Prime Minister added that he had also spoken to Mr Shillington, who, of his own volition, had also put forward a proposal identical to the decision reached by the Cabinet.

Mr Maudling said that he would like to talk to Ted Heath about the proposal and added that it was important presentationally to include a reference in any press statement about the future annual inspection of the RUC by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The Home Secretary then asked about the results of the Referendum on arms held by the Representative Body. The Prime Minister said that a majority had come out in favour of the present policy but by a small percentage. He added that it was not altogether satisfactory as it had been hoped that a much larger number would have been in favour of the Government's policy.

1.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

The Home Secretary said that he felt that his officials were rather too depressed about the results and he had instructed them that if they were asked about it they should emphasise that the policy of the Northern Ireland Government had not altered in any way and in addition that the extreme right wing had been proved wildly optimistic in their claims. He agreed to get in touch with Stormont Castle with his views on the Cabinet proposal and, if necessary, speak to the Prime Minister by telephone in England.

BRC/DD

2.

CONFIDENTIAL