

Mr Bourn

1. We discussed in general terms on 6 January the lines which might be followed in publicity activity during the period of the cease-fire. We were agreed that there should be minimum comment on the political front but were concerned that a vacuum should not be left which could be filled by extremist propaganda.

The following are the preliminary thoughts of the information staffs at Stormont Castle after discussion with the RUC and Army PR officers.

2. It has been necessary over the past few days and will continue to be necessary to stress that responsibility for the continuance of the cease-fire lies with the provisional IRA. This can only be done within limits and since we cannot expect to dominate the media on this basis alone it is considered important to concentrate our efforts on "diversionary" publicity.

The Secretary of State and Ministers will have an important part to play and attached at Annex A is a list of forthcoming events upon which Mr Roberts' staff will endeavour to concentrate the attention of the media.

3. In addition to these specific events we should consider the following:-

- (a) Now that peace has "broken out" there are a number of areas in which studies might be done (and publicised) of the problems faced by residents and of the best ways in which to deal with them. Although it may look like a gimmick this might be done by "flying squads" of civil servants from various departments who would discuss with local officials and community representatives, progress being made on schemes already in hand. They might also take the views of locals on what they see as problems which could be overcome by Government action.
- (b) There are a number of projects which are in progress at the present time upon which attention might be concentrated by a visit from the Secretary of State or a Minister. Two examples are the West Belfast Training Centre and the work being done on the new County Down rail terminus.
- (c) This is the time when the Northern Ireland Tourist Board must be making plans for the coming season and it would be a useful exercise to stimulate them into creating publicity about their activities. By coincidence Bangor made a limited effort to attract attention within the past few days and did very well on radio and in the Press.

- (d) We have already discussed in a preliminary way the possibility of reducing the search procedures in the various segment areas and indeed of opening up temporarily some of the town centres in rural areas. This would have an effect on morale generally although it must be recognised that it would not necessarily receive much Press attention.
4. The RUC and Army have undertaken to examine the ways in which the "peaceful" side of their activities can be publicised - eg the work of their community relations branches.
  5. Finally, although experience in the past has not proved encouraging, Departmental heads might investigate with prominent industrialists, businessmen and trade union leaders the extent to which they as independent spokesmen might lend their weight in projecting the better aspects of life here. They might emphasise the effect that the cease-fire is having on business, on attendance at work, on the improvement in attendance at cinemas, theatres, etc.

*Gilliland*

D GILLILAND

8 January 1975