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PS/Mr Scott (B & L)

VISIT TO MAZE PRISON ON 7 MARCH

1. Arrangements have been made for Mr Scott to visit Maze prison on 7 March. Mr Scott last saw round the prison in February 1985 although he did of course attend the ceremony for the dedication of the 2 chapels in June 1985.

Annexation of Maze (Compound)

2. Maze Cellular prison now houses just over 700 prisoners - the figure this time last year was 735 - split between 16 segregated republican wings, 5 segregated loyalists wings and 8 integrated wings. As the Minister knows, the Secretary of State decided in July 1985 that Maze (Compound) prison should be run as an annexe of the Cellular prison. As a result, the Compound prison will be considerably reduced in size, and managed as another phase of Maze (Cellular). The work necessary to complete full annexation of the Compound is being implemented in stages because of operational and contractual considerations. Work is in progress to implement the first stages of annexation by 1 April 1986. However, there are still some industrial relations issues with the POA to be finally resolved. From 3 March Mr Des McMullan, the Governor of Maze (Cellular) prison, will assume direct responsibility for the Compound prison. The present Compound Governor, Mr Duncan McLaughlin, will take up a post in Headquarters on that date. From 3 March the entire prison will be known as HM Prison, Maze.

Control of Prisoners in Maze (Cellular) Prison

3. While the prison has remained superficially quite we believe that there is no question of the prisoners giving up their struggle to achieve more control within the prison. In particular, PIRA continue to exert pressure and intimidation on members of staff using their favourite tactic of offering "helpful" advice to officers about their future safety. The prisoners are so adept at using this tactic that it is often very difficult to charge them

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with an offence against Prison Rules, and this does, of course, have an effect on discipline and control. The Governor has taken steps to reduce the pressure on staff. In August 1985, he opened a Movement Control Office (which the Minister will see) which not only monitors the movement of each prisoner in the establishment, but also allocates prisoners to particular cells in wings. Cell allocation within wings was an area PIRA were keen to influence. In addition, the physical security of the blocks has been enhanced by better use of CCTV coverage and electronic locking. New measures to enhance the control of staff are being examined. These measures, based on the concept of a "pod" - a secure observation point installed at the dining-room end of the wing to help observe and control inmates' movements - are currently being considered by the Governor and the Prisons Department. A submission will be sent to the Minister in due course. The Minister will be aware of a recent development involving a "bent" officer which has been the subject of separate advice.

4. Regime Improvements

As the Minister is aware we have made significant progress on regime improvements in Maze (Cellular) over the last 15 months. These include:-

- a. the introduction of a second period of exercise;
- b. the re-introduction of gym, football and cell crafts;
- c. the provision of additional books for the prison library, including a number of Irish books;
- d. the introduction of additional distance learning courses, including Irish 'O' level;
- e. the showing of large screen films in the dining halls;

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- f. the introduction of inter-wing gym and football on a controlled ? basis:
- g. the provision of colour televisions in all wings.

The Minister has also proved the re-opening of the hobbies rooms in the wings in Maze as television rooms and the purchase of better quality snooker tables. These matters are being pursued. Finally, we plan to install TV aerials at Maze to enable RTE programmes to be received. The extra 2 channels will widen the choice of viewing, particularly day time sport. This will be appreciated by all prisoners as both loyalists and republicans have asked for RTE from time to time.

New Main Gate/Visits Complex

- 5. Preliminary work on the project, (the last major Hennessy recommendation outstanding) which encompasses a purpose-built gatehouse, visits complex and prisoners' search facility as well as a separate vehicle unload/search unit, commenced during the summer of 1984. Completion was envisaged for end of May 1987 and the initial cost was £2m.

Early physical work on the project has included a 17' high reinforced concrete security wall which has effectively enclosed and secured the site. Unfortunately due to pressure on financial resources work on the next phase of the project has had to be deferred and it is now anticipated that the complex will be completed in April 1988. The total project cost is now estimated to be in the region of £3m and tenders will shortly be sought, once current discussions with HM Treasury concerning revised financial approval have been concluded. The substantial difference in project costs reflects the urgency with which the project was handled in the early stages of planning. Initial costings were only of a very broad nature and as the project was detailed it became apparent that actual project cost was going to exceed the original figures.

Despite recent problems with the withdrawal of contractors from prison works projects there is some indication that local contractors will be prepared to bid for this contract.

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Legal Actions Arising from the Aftermath of the Maze Escape

6. The Minister is aware that 53 prisoners are pursuing compensation claims against the Department for injuries alleged to have been sustained following the Maze breakout on 25 September 1983. These claims are slowly coming up for hearing. We won the first of the County Court cases; the Plaintiff has lodged an appeal and the next case has started but has not yet been completed. There have been no High Court cases heard as yet. In 2 claims, which we had no hope of winning, out of court settlements have been offered; one has been accepted and we are awaiting the Plaintiff's decision on the other. The POA are, in general keen to have the allegations contested in court but nevertheless did agree to the settlement in these particular cases, and may do so in others.

Chapels in Maze (Cellular Prison)

7. The 2 chapels which were completed in the autumn of 1984 can accommodate 70 prisoners each. The services of dedication were conducted by the heads of the 4 main churches on 17 June 1985; Mr Scott was present at one of the services. Unfortunately because of security implications in the movement of such a considerable number of prisoners at one time, the logistical problems posed for prison staff in transport and escort duties and the expenses involved in the payment of overtime for Sunday working the chapels have only been used for weddings of prisoners.
8. The Minister recently asked that this position be reviewed with a view to making some use of the chapels for worship. We and the Governor were already unhappy about their lack of use and a local working party was set up in the prison in January to make recommendations to the Governor on how the chapels might be better utilised. The working party is due to report in the next few days and the Governor should, therefore, be better placed to discuss the situation with the Minister during the visit on 7 March. By then the Governor should have his own views clearer, and may also have had the opportunity to discuss the report with the Prison Chaplains.

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Senior Management

9. Pen Pictures of Senior Staff at Maze have been sent to you separately.

Programme for the Visit

10. 0930 hours Arrive Maze (Cellular) - met at the Extern Gate by the Deputy Governor and Chief Officer I.

0945 hours To Governor's Office for Coffee

1030 hours To visit the following areas:-
(approximately)

1. Locations Control and Security Office
2. Sports Hall
3. Segregated RC Wing
Segregated Protestant Wing
Mixed Prisoners Wing

1215 hours To Governor's Mess

1230 hours Lunch

1330 hours Depart

11. Mr Jackson will accompany Mr Scott on the visit.


Prison Regimes Division

28th February 1986

cc PS/PUS (B & L)
Mr Stephens


Mr Jackson

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