



Mr. J. O. Wright:

Siting of new Northern Ireland university at Coleraine

In connection with the visit tomorrow by the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland you have asked for a brief note on the decision to locate the new university at Coleraine.

This matter is entirely within the field of responsibility of the Government of Northern Ireland. It has, however, proved to be a most contentious question in Northern Ireland and has given rise to considerable political difficulty for members of the Government there.

The Northern Ireland Government, following publication of the Robbins Report on Higher Education, set up a similar committee under the Chairmanship of Sir John Lockwood, Master of Birbeck College, University of London, to report on higher education in Northern Ireland. The Committee recommended, amongst other things, the establishment of a second university, and on the basis of the principles used by the University Grants Committee here (and set out in the 'Lockwood' Report) recommended that the new university be sited at Coleraine. The Committee also recommended the closing of Magee College, Londonderry (which feeds university students after one or two year courses to Queen's University, Belfast, or to Trinity College, Dublin, for completion of degree courses). Publication of the Report was followed by intense agitation by the people of Londonderry of all parties and creeds for the siting of the university at Londonderry and for the retention of Magee College as a university institution.

The Government of Northern Ireland has announced its intention of investigating further whether Magee College can be incorporated in the new university, but, to the bitter disappointment of the people of Londonderry, has accepted the recommendation of the Lockwood Committee that the new university should be sited at Coleraine.

*R. M. Harris.*

R. 18th May, 1965.