

First Reply
444- H. Wilson. D. 4.
doctored 188 Sir. F. Cooper N.I. Office Pol35/82(1)
Refused to use it.

Our intentions in response to the cease fire have been stated publicly in Parliament and elsewhere. Consistently with that public position our policies have been explained privately on many occasions. Our honour and sincerity are entirely committed to the ending of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

We have considered very carefully all that has been said to us reflecting the views of Republicans. We have reconsidered our position very carefully in the light of those views. We accept that the leadership of the Republican movement sincerely wish a permanent peace. We well understand the problems which the leadership of the Republican movement face in realising that wish.

We too have grave problems. There is a continuing law and order problem. More people are being killed and wounded now than before the ceasefire. No Government can stand idly by in the face of this violence much of which stems from gangsterism or from internecine strife between the OIRA and IRSP and between the UDA and the UVF.

Progress can only be made by recognising the realities of the situation. These include the political facts of life. One such fact is that the Government can only move at a pace acceptable to opinion in Great Britain; the Government is answerable to 50 million people.

Majority opinion in Ireland in general, and in Northern Ireland in particular, is a real factor - it cannot be ignored or brushed under the carpet. What are the Republicans doing to bring about a constructive relationship with the 'loyalists' - surely a most crucial area?

No solution to Northern Ireland's problems is excluded but no solution will work unless substance and timing are brought together.

We have done what we said we would do and are ready to continue along the path publicly outlined.

The achievements of the past 50 days of peace are very real.

We have done all in our power to avoid actions which might contribute to a return to violence. The Army is now going to great pains to avoid any actions that may be regarded as provocative, will only arrest people for breaking the law, and will not shoot except where this is necessary to defend themselves or others from attack.

We want to see a genuine and sustained cessation of violence. Natural development into a more peaceable situation will permit an acceleration of the pace of progress. For example, as we have always said, the rate at which detainees are released can be quickened if the end to violence can be sustained.

As regards the political future of Northern Ireland, we are unable to understand the position of the Republican movement. They have not only decided to boycott the Constitutional Convention (an entirely Irish occasion). We have no evidence that they have any plans to put their political ideas forward in any other or to enter into the give and take of the political arena.

We regard the present time as a historic opportunity to move steadily, progressively and purposefully to bring to an end the conflict which has bedevilled Irish history.

We are bending all our efforts not to miss this opportunity and to progress steadily down the road of peace and reconciliation.

We believe that others have a grave responsibility to posterity to do likewise, and to show patience, sincerity and goodwill.

50th day of
1975

10V35182(3)

ceasefire
(see paragraph 8)

POSSIBLY

MARCH -