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PRIME MINISTER

You asked for the A-G's
advice when Cabinet
considered the Bingham
question. Content with
A-G's conclusions?



THE PRIME MINISTER

MAP
25/vi.

RHODESIA SANCTIONS: FURTHER ENQUIRY

At Cabinet on 14th June I gave certain illustrative figures of the number of further documents which are likely to be involved in the criminal investigations following on the Bingham Report. I undertook to consider whether the argument against a further enquiry based upon the difficulty and expense of sifting such unmanageable quantities of documents could draw upon the size of the problem of examining documents in the criminal investigation and use the figures I gave.

On reflection I see a substantial objection to disclosing these facts and figures about the criminal investigations in the context of a debate on a further enquiry. It is possible that at a later stage I might wish to use the facts and figures about the documents involved to explain whatever decision I may take about any prosecutions. To disclose them now could blunt the impact of my explanation. Secondly, it might be a ground for accusations, however unfounded, that the Cabinet was concerning itself with the details of the post-Bingham criminal investigations which, as part of the prosecution process, are a matter within the independent responsibilities of the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

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In any case I doubt whether any argument against the enquiry based upon the volume of documents which would have to be considered, even on narrow terms of reference, needs to be bolstered up by facts about the criminal investigations.

I am sending a copy of this minute to the other members of the Cabinet and to Sir John Hunt.

MH

15th June, 1979

Attorney-General's Chambers
Law Officers' Department
Royal Courts of Justice

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