

M Ireland

NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN MR. MICHAEL ALISON AND MR. OWEN CARRON

The meeting lasted an hour. Mr. Carron was restrained and friendly.

Mr. Alison first tested Mr. Carron on his intentions as an MP, and warned him that our handling of him would be influenced by whether or not he fulfilled his role as an MP (we have safeguarded our position in dealing with him). Carron said he would not take his seat while the hunger strike was on, but did not rule out doing so afterwards.

Mr. Carron sought to establish the flexibility shown by the prisoners and their "weakness" vis-a-vis Government.

The Minister outlined the Government's position on remission, clothing, work and association in the terms of the statements of 30 June and 8 July, and explained why the Government could neither act nor be more specific now.

Carron brought out clearly the importance to the protestors of segregation and of a work and association regime which met that requirement. The Minister explained the incompatibility of what the prisoners were demanding with their assertions that they did not want to be treated differently or to take over the governing of the prison. He added that they did not need to die for segregation. The Government objective remained integration, but the prisoners had received segregation through protest action.

An Information Officer was present throughout the meeting, and is giving background information to the Press.

(MISS J. WRIGHT)

Private Secretary to Mr. Alison.

28 August, 1981.

A fuller note will be available next week.