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Ireland



*Press Office*

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10 December 1980

*Prime Minister*

*MAD 10/12/80*

Dear Mike

You may wish to know about the case of Ward, a remand prisoner, currently held at Brixton charged with handling stolen goods. Ward has been refusing food and liquids since 27 October and has from 30 October been under observation in the prison hospital. Until recently he had been taking small quantities of food and water passed to him surreptitiously.

Ward has now professed sympathy with the IRA, and on 4 December informed the prison authorities that he would abstain completely from food and drink as a protest against the treatment of H Block inmates in the Maze. We have no reason to suppose that Ward is connected with the IRA, or that the IRA have adopted his cause (if indeed it ever becomes a cause). He does now seem, however, to be determined to take his life and, if he goes on as he says he intends, his physical condition will deteriorate rapidly.

We will keep you informed of developments.

A copy of this letter goes to Mike Hopkins (NIO).

*MP*

*Yours ever  
Andrew Jackson*

A. P. JACKSON

M. A. Pattison, Esq.