

MR INGHAM

MR POWELL

see by Prime Minister

DR FITZGERALD'S SPEECH TO THE PRESS GALLERY: 19 FEBRUARY

Dr Fitzgerald spoke to an enthusiastic audience of between 80 and 90 with television cameras present (for the first time at such a reception). He led off with Sellafield. He said that his Government was deeply concerned with the 18 significant incidents over 32 years, 4 of which were in the last few weeks. He stressed that one of these incidents had been under-reported by a factor of 40. There was a real concern in the Irish Government on their receipt of incorrect information from HMG which caused him to think that there were inefficient areas of monitoring at Sellafield. He suggested a form of Euro-control which could investigate and monitor incidents as necessary and be able to order shut-down.

He then went on to Anglo-Irish matters. He said that Hillsborough had been a meeting of minds in that both he and the Prime Minister had identified the nature of the problem. He said that co-operation on security was showing useful results; that in the long term the whole community would benefit but in the immediate future it was obviously the minority which would see benefits. He announced, to applause, that his Government would sign next week the European Accord on Terrorism following legal advice from the Irish Supreme Court. Legislation in the Dail would take some time because it would be complicated and require considerable work.

In response to a question "Would he seek a quid pro quo from the Prime Minister on the signing?", he said that changes can and need to be made in the administration of justice. He would not be drawn on devolution beyond referring to John Hume's statement in the House ie Hume was prepared to talk.

Dr Fitzgerald gave numerous media interviews after he had made his speech.

M. Horne

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PRESS OFFICE

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