



HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

SECRET AND PERSONAL

NBPM
(du grees)

CAF 12/3

Prime Minister

Anglo-Irish Talks: Joint Courts

Douglas Hurd has sent me a copy of his minute to you of 7th March in which he refers to the letter he has had from the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland dealing with Doctor Garret FitzGerald's proposal for the setting up of a Joint Court to try terrorists.

I am bound to say that I see no future in this proposal under present conditions. It would be fraught with technical problems which could be resolved only with goodwill and a determination to make the system succeed. Lord Lowry has made it quite clear that this will not be forthcoming, and I have since heard from him that both the Roman Catholic judges who are members of the Supreme Court of Northern Ireland would be strongly against it.

I do not think that opposition to this idea would be limited to the judiciary and I would be against encouraging the Taoiseach to pin any hopes on the scheme, at all events at the present time.

The Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland came to see me the other day and was very emphatic.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Attorney General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

H: of S: M.

11th March, 1985