

Press not informed of the Special Court held in Londonderry on Sunday, 6th October, at 5 p.m. O'Doherty, McCann and Melough arrested during the afternoon of Sunday and charged under Section 22 of the Public Order Act 1951, i.e., organising parade in contravention of Minister's Prohibition Order. Initially arrangements were made to hold the Court in the Courthouse but due to the existing circumstances, i.e. trouble in and around The Diamond and the crowds of people congregated there, the District Inspector considered it imperative in the interests of security to switch venue of Court. He had approval of the Resident Magistrate, Mr. Shearer, for this course. Formal evidence of arrest only was given.

After depositions had been completed Melough addressed the Court about the happenings on Saturday night and said that these were the actions of hooligans and asked if he could be facilitated in going to Butcher's Gate to talk to these irresponsible people. The police facilitated Melough.

District Inspector McGimpsey later communicated to Mr. Sidney Buchanan, Derry Sentinel, details of the Special Court and what Melough had said about the disturbances. Mr. Buchanan undertook to pass this on to other papers.

Whether the secret court proceedings yesterday (Sunday) had Cabinet approval?

The organisers of the parade - Eamonn McCann, Eamonn Melough and George Finbar O'Doherty - were brought before a special court on Sunday, 6th October, and charged with a breach of the Public Order Act (Northern Ireland) 1951. They were remanded on bail.

Originally it had been arranged that the hearing be held in the Courthouse, and the Resident Magistrate, Clerk of Petty Sessions and Courthouse Keeper were informed accordingly. Later, however, the District Inspector decided that the hearing might lead to a scene outside the Courthouse and so arrangements were altered and the Court held in the Police Station. This was not a secret court. Special Courts are a normal feature of Petty Sessions procedure but as they are held at very short notice, it is not customary, nor would it always be possible, to notify the Press. Should, however, a Press representative inquire he would be told if a Special Court was to be held and if he wished he would be admitted.