

than the right hon. Gentleman intimated. I suggest that he wait to listen to the detailed statement by my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Does my right hon. Friend agree that one should not unfairly—or even fairly—always go back to what people put in their election addresses in the 1980s, but one might want to look at what they put in their election addresses at the last general election and then wonder how many of those policies they have reversed in the past five years?

The Prime Minister: I think it is possible—*[Interruption.]* I am prepared to offer a prize to anyone who can find five policies on which the right hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) has been consistent.

Mr. Hume: Is the Prime Minister aware that today is the 25th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities in the past 25 years in Northern Ireland, when the security forces shot dead 14 people on the streets of my city? Does he agree that the more than 3,000 people who have died in the past 25 years have all suffered atrocity, and that their families have suffered trauma because of such tragedies?

Given that that was the only atrocity that was carried out by the security forces with the ratification of Government, and given that the Prime Minister has told me in writing that those who were killed on Bloody Sunday should be regarded as innocent of any allegation that they were shot while handling firearms or explosives,

can he please tell me why they were shot? If he does not know, does he not think that the matter requires public investigation?

The Prime Minister: I understand how the hon. Gentleman feels about the matter. Everybody knows his record in Northern Ireland over the years, and I pay due tribute to it.

The hon. Gentleman spoke of ratification by Government. I think that he might wish to reconsider what he said about that. The events of 25 years ago constituted a terrible tragedy. I concede that to the hon. Gentleman. I believe that everyone is determined that the lessons of that day are never forgotten. That, too, I share with the hon. Gentleman.

The actions at the time were fully investigated by the Widgery committee. I know of no reason at present to reopen that inquiry. If anyone has fresh, relevant evidence, of course it should be sent to the proper authorities. The important point is that everyone acknowledges the tragedy of what happened a quarter of a century ago today. The Government, with the hon. Gentleman's help and, I concede, with the help of the leader of the Liberal party, the leader of the Labour party and many others, have been trying to reach a situation in Northern Ireland where there never, ever again need be any prospect of such an event recurring. That is what I passionately want. I do not believe that anyone doubts that. Without fresh evidence, I see no advantage in raking over old problems. If there were fresh evidence, of course we would examine it.