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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
Dublin 2.

July 1986.

Mr. Michael Lillis,
Secretariat,
Belfast.

NOT ISSUED

Closure of Cross-Border Roads

The Department of Justice have supplied us with a copy of a recent letter from RUC to Gardai giving details of crossing points they propose to reclose. The Gardai have examined it and have said that they have no objection from a security point of view. (Copies of correspondence has been sent to Noel Ryan). The Gardai have also indicated that no work will be undertaken until a Garda response has been received by the RUC.

With regard to the 15 crossings, we anticipate no particular problem except in one case: It is proposed to close the Clady to Dunnalob Road. The effect of this would be to cause residents of Clady a five mile detour to get to mass in Dunnalob. The other crossings are in fact re-closures.

We have considered the response we should make in this case and the manner in which it should be communicated. We do not favour the Garda/RUC channel in this instance and suggest that our response be communicated through yourself.

As to the particulars of our reply, I believe that we should again make it clear that we are opposed to all road closures as a matter of principle. The Minister has clearly stated this policy on many occasions and were we to go along with the present list of proposed re-closures it would run counter to that policy. Though the majority of the roads in question have been closed in the past we do not seem to have had any particular problems brought to our attention as a result.

While we should maintain our stand on cross-border roads in the present instance we should make a particularly strong point in relation to the closure of the Clady/Dunnalob road where there are likely to be difficulties locally. It would also be worthwhile to point out that since the Agreement we have yet to have a single cross-border road reopened despite the political importance which the Minister has attached to such a move and while we appreciate being advised of the proposed road closure plans we would wish to see some positive proposals emerging as regards the re-opening of some cross-border roads.

Declan O'Donovan.