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OIFIG AN TÁNAISTE AGUS AN AIRE GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRA
OFFICE OF THE TÁNAISTE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

7 July, 1995

Mr. Breandán MacCionnaith
Garvaghy Road Residents Group
Drumcree Community Centre
3 Ashgrove Road
Portadown BT61 1EU
Co. Armagh

Dear Mr. MacCionnaith,


The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dick Spring T.D. has asked me to respond to your recent letter concerning Orange marches in Portadown.

The Tánaiste is aware of the difficulties surrounding the parade to which you refer. As you know, his officials have remained in touch with relevant developments. The Government subscribe to the general principle that parades should not take place in an area, or along a route where they are not welcome and successive Irish Governments have raised the specific implications of this general principle in discussions of the parades issue with the British Government in the framework of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

It is, in our view, both right and prudent that the right to march and to demonstrate should be exercised with respect for the rights and sensitivities of others, with regard for the maintenance of public order.

The Tánaiste shares your view that it is important to build on cross-community relations in Portadown and agrees that voluntary rerouting of parades from areas where they are not welcome is the most desirable way forward in the first instance. At this time of great opportunity for the future, he also wishes to emphasise the importance of restraint on all sides during the marching season.

Yours sincerely,


Niall A. Burgess
Private Secretary



OIFIG AN TÁNAISTE AGUS AN AIRE GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
OFFICE OF THE TÁNAISTE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

15 June, 1995

Mr. Breandán MacCionnaith
Garvaghy Road Residents Group
Drumcree Community Centre
3 Ashgrove Road
Portadown BT62 1EU
Co. Armagh

Dear Mr. MacCionnaith,

On behalf of the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dick Spring T.D., I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 6 June concerning the routing of parades by the Orange Order through Catholic/Nationalist areas of Portadown.

Your letter is receiving attention at the moment.

Yours sincerely,

NIALL BURGESS

Niall A. Burgess
Private Secretary

Garvaghy Road Residents Group
Drumcree Community Centre,
3 Ashgrove Road,
Portadown BT62 1EU,
Co. Armagh.



6th June 1995

Mr. Dick Spring TD,
Oifig an Tánaiste agus an Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha,
Dublin 2.

Dear Mr. Spring,

The routing of parades by the Orange Order through Catholic/Nationalist areas of Portadown have been a major source of contention in the town. They lead to a heightening of tension and an increase of sectarian division.

Various groups representing the Nationalist community living along this route have continually opposed these marches. However pleas to have these marches rerouted have met with little success.

This year, following a public meeting in the Drumcree Community Centre on May 10th, the Garvaghy Road Residents Group was formed to express opposition to the Orange Order marches. This group is supported by all shades of local Nationalist opinion, ranging from Community and Housing Associations, the Drumcree Faith and Justice Group and the main nationalist political parties. We therefore represent the views of the vast majority of the population in the Garvaghy Road area.

We are calling upon your office to intervene directly with the Northern Ireland Office, on our behalf, and have the Orange marches directed along a mutually acceptable route.

Yours sincerely,

Breandán Mac Cionnaith

Breandán Mac Cionnaith (PRO)