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**Statement by the Tánaiste on the publication of the North Review of Parades and Marches, 30 January 1997**

"This year's marching season begins in two months' time.

We cannot afford a repeat of the events of the past summer at Drumcree and elsewhere, which, as the North Report points out, brought Northern Ireland close to anarchy and inflicted such enormous political and economic damage. There are already ominous signs that the confrontational attitudes and the refusal of dialogue which caused the crisis last year are again coming to the fore.

The Report confirms the widely-held view that change is needed and that a great majority of people favour mediation, compromise and a set of rules as the way forward. The Report offers some carefully considered proposals as to how a new, more transparent and consistent approach to the problem can be put in place, based on the establishment of an independent Parades Commission.

Whatever reservations there may be on points of detail, it is vital in view of the imminence of the marching season that its key recommendations should be implemented without delay. I would hope that the British Government and the parties at Westminster would now give this issue the political priority it deserves. Everyone in these islands has an interest in the implementation of new arrangements in advance of this year's marching season. I will be speaking to the Secretary of State in this regard very shortly."

Press Section
30 January 1997

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