



On the other hand Government has, I believe, a responsibility not only to protect public funds against direct abuse but also to ensure that public funding would not otherwise have the effect of improving the standing and furthering the aims of paramilitary organisations, either directly or indirectly. The policy outlined by Douglas Hurd, and endorsed by successive Secretaries of State, including myself, seeks to do this. The policy was introduced only after very careful thought and decisions taken under it are likewise considered very carefully. Inevitably the application of the policy in a particular case will affect some otherwise desirable activity, and I regret this as much as you do, but in the light of the above I hope you will understand the reason why this policy has been introduced and is still considered necessary. Political belief is not an issue in the application of the policy.

As regards the decision to withdraw funding from the West Belfast Committee of Glor na nGael I again fully appreciate your concerns. As you will know I have also received other representations on this matter, which I have read with great care, and in the light of which I have again examined all the circumstances of this case. However after careful consideration of all the information currently available to me, I have concluded that public funding should not be restored. I realise that this decision will be a disappointment to the West Belfast Committee, and to others, but I can assure you that neither it, nor my earlier decision, was taken lightly. As in all such cases this decision is subject to further review should circumstances change.

In writing to the West Belfast Committee I have been at pains to point out that the decision to withdraw funding from that Committee does not imply any judgement on the wider work of Glor na nGael, nor is it directed against the Irish language and culture. I have also made it quite clear that the Government recognises and respects the importance of the Irish language to those who view it as an integral part of their tradition and that Government support for the Irish



language through the formal education system, and the voluntary sector, is undiminished.

A copy of the Press Release incorporating my reply to the West Belfast Committee is enclosed for your information and will, I hope, reassure you that I have given this matter the most careful consideration.

I have written in similar terms to ~~Dr~~ James Hawthorne. 13

*Sincerely
Pm Brooke*

PB

PM/11.15 (2)
PM/11.15 (2)
PM/11.15 (2)
PM/11.15 (2)
PM/11.15 (2)
PM/11.15 (2)

11.15 (2)

Enc

11.15 (2)
PM/SOFS/4196