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Miss J. Brown

*Noted
J. Brown
20/11/92*

30.11.92
DEPUTY SECRETARY
(Criminal Justice)
27 NOV 1992
N.I.O.
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FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
27 NOVEMBER 1992

- cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Atkins (L,DOE&DED) - M
- PS/Mr Mates (L,B&DFP) - B/M
- PS/Lord Arran (L,DANI&DHSS) - M
- PS/Mr Hanley (L,B&DENI) - B/M
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Murray - M
- Mr Hamilton - M
- Mr Ledlie - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Elliott - M
- Mr Semple - M
- Mr Blackwell - B
- Mr Lyon *26 27/11* - B
- Mr Dowdy, DHSS - M
- Mr Hunter, DHSS - M
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr McConnell - B
- Mr Wylie, SSA - M
- Mr Robinson, Compensation Agency - M

Mr Watkins - B

BELVOIR ESTATE - REQUEST FOR A MEETING BY DR PAISLEY AND MR PETER ROBINSON MP

The Secretary of State was grateful for the extremely helpful briefing which you provided for his discussion with Dr Paisley and Mr Robinson yesterday afternoon. The meeting lasted for about 25 minutes.

2. Dr Paisley handed the Secretary of State the minutes of the public meeting which he had attended in Belvoir on 23 November (I am circulating these separately). Dr Paisley took the Secretary of State through the various complaints which had been made at that meeting and which were recorded in the minutes. He described the occasion as the most distressing meeting he had ever attended. Emotion had been running high, partly because these were people living in an area which, until the bomb, had been relatively insulated from the troubles. In some ways they had coped better with the immediate shock of the explosion than they had with coming to terms with the events subsequently.

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The specific requests which Dr Paisley and Mr Robinson made to the Secretary of State were that:

- interim compensation payments should be made speedily: there was a great need for them;
- the suggestion that there was an upper limit of £22,000 for compensation should be firmly squashed;
- 'the committee which had been set up under Mr Fell' should be set to work again to address the various problems identified at the meeting.

4. The Secretary of State deployed the various points which you had included in your briefing note and encouraged Dr Paisley to get in touch with Mr Billy Cameron of the Housing Executive. Dr Paisley and Mr Robinson said that they would do so.

5. The Secretary of State confirmed that there could ^{be} no question of waiving the £200 threshold for damage compensation. He made it clear that Mr Mates had not suggested at any stage that it could be waived. What he had done in the immediate aftermath of the explosion was to agree that owner occupiers could assign their compensation rights to the Housing Executive so that the latter could undertake work on their behalf, though on the basis that at the end of the day householders would have to meet the first £200 of the expense. For whatever reason this facility did not appear to have been taken up. Mr Robinson commented that Mr Mates' offer had indeed been helpful: people had not taken it up at Belvoir because they had not had the information quickly enough but a number of people had availed themselves of the facility following the Glengormley explosion.

6. Your line on the rain penetration at Castlehume gardens was greeted with much guffawing from Dr Paisley and Mr Robinson. They

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id that the Housing Executive had not been round until Monday to see what had gone wrong and it was certainly the case that on Saturday there had been flooding: 'furniture had been floating in the water'.

7. The Secretary of State noted Mr Robinson's assertion that local residents was very concerned to know where the Forensic Science Laboratory was to be re-established but declined to be drawn on the point.

8. The Secretary of State did not commit himself to sending a written response to the detailed points raised by Dr Paisley and it may be that we should wait to hear the outcome of his meeting with Mr Cameron though if there are any matters on which you think we should send an early response I should be grateful for a reply. Dr Paisley did hand the Secretary of State a letter (circulated with the minutes) about two of his constituents (I assume he is referring to his Euro Constituency) and I should be grateful if you could arrange for a draft reply to that to be submitted to us as quickly as possible.

Signed

W R FITTALL
PS/Secretary of State
OAB Extn 6462
27 November 1992

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