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UNDER
SEC 826/6
24 JUN 1998
CENT SEC

FROM: S J LEACH
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR POLICING AND SECURITY
24 June 1998

- cc PS/PUS (B & L)
- PS/Mr Semple
- Mr Steele
- Mr Jeffrey
- Mr Ray
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Perry
- Mr Priestly
- Mr Clarke

ASST DB 547/6
SEC 25 JUN 1998
CENT SEC

has been
This is for you
(as SJL sent. know).
24.6

MR FERGUSON

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

After the rehearsals of the last two years, DED will doubtless have at an advanced state of readiness its contingency plans to maintain electricity supplies in the event of politically-motivated industrial action arising from Drumcree. In this context, it may be worth mentioning to you that a member of the Parades Commission, for whose judgement and common-sense I have considerable respect, has heard from what is described as a very reliable source that (on the assumption of a negative decision by the Commission) a number of power station workers are planning to walk out next Friday (3 July) taking with them a range of essential components whose absence would make electricity generation impractical in the short term.

2. This story may well turn out to have no foundation, but you might wish to check with DED that the power generators would be able to cope with this contingency if it arose.

[sgd]

S J LEACH
Ext: 27012

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DB/41/6

**FROM: MRS DOREEN BROWN
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT
25 JUNE 1998**

**cc PS/Mr Pilling (B&L) - O
PS/Mr Semple - O
Mr Loughran
Mr Steele - O
Mr Jeffrey - O
Mr Ray
Mr Gibson
Mr Watkins - O
Mr Maccabe - O
Mr Perry - O
Mr Priestly - O
Mr Clarke - O
Mr Clements - O**

MR LEACH - O

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

1. David Ferguson has passed to me your note of 24 June in which you reported that there was some information to suggest that a number of power workers intended to walk out on Friday 3 July if the Parades Commission decision on Drumcree was negative.
2. I have spoken to Mr Gibson in DED about your note, and DED are involved with Central Secretariat and other Departments on arrangements for dealing with civil disruption during the marching season.
3. In the event of industrial action at power stations, managers would be able to keep power stations operating for a certain time, but the Government cannot guarantee that electricity supplies could be maintained. In the past, the Government could have used the Army to man power stations but, because of the complexity of modern stations, the Army does not have the expertise to take over power generation.

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4. That said, there are some more positive points to be made. DED has checked with Ballylumford and has been told that there is no suggestion that workers are planning to walk out. A rumour of industrial action had circulated pre-Drumcree last year but came to nothing. The power workers had no stomach to be used as the storm troops in a battle with the Government. So far, that seems to be their stance this year. If, however, there are any indications to the contrary, DED will be informed by power station management.

5. The other positive point is that it is not possible for power workers to remove essential components, thus making electricity generation impractical. This is, again, linked to the different nature of modern power stations which I mentioned above.



D A BROWN

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