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cc PS/SOS (B&L)
 PS/PUS (B&L)
 1 ✓ PS/Mr Blodfield
 Mr Gilliland
 Mr Reeve
 Mr Perkins

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Mr P. Cleasby

VISIT BY THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES PRINCE AND PRINCESS MICHAEL OF KENT - ALLEGED COMPLAINT BY LORD MAYOR OF BELFAST AS REPORTED IN SUNDAY WORLD

1. I refer to your minute of 24 June in which you asked
 - (a) whether or not the Lord Mayor did in fact express the views attributed to him;
 - (b) whether the events at Shorts, as described are an accurate reflection of what did take place; and
 - (c) whether a response either publicly or privately should be made to the criticism.
2. In order to verify the facts I have spoken to the Lord Lieutenant for Belfast, Sir Robin Kinahan, Mr David Fell, Permanent Secretary, DED and Miss Adeline Semple the Lord Mayor's secretary. In speaking to Miss Semple, who was unable to verify whether or not the Lord Mayor had given an interview to the Sunday World, I indicated that I was rather surprised that if things had not gone according to plan, that she had not telephoned me directly as would have been her usual custom. She seemed somewhat agitated and kept wanting to pass me on to the Town Clerk.
3. I do not think that the Lord Mayor was directly responsible for the press report in which some of the remarks are attributed to Councillor Hugh Smyth. Yesterday morning I had spoken to the Lord Lieutenant and confirmed that the presentation of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress had taken place immediately on the Prince's arrival at Shorts, as planned. Later in the afternoon the Lord Lieutenant phoned me to say that he had decided to speak to the Lord Mayor himself. As a result of this conversation the Lord Mayor wanted to rush off and issue a denial to the Sunday World but was dissuaded by the Lord Lieutenant from doing so.
4. The report in the Sunday World is not a true reflection of the events at Shorts and on the attached schedule I have attempted to analyse the criticisms. It is

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CONFIDENTIAL

E.R.

interesting to note that from the press cuttings of the visit only the Sunday World produced the two nasties - see the cutting - Princess - marry go round.

5. The Secretary of State will recall that John Carson and Frank Millar Senn complained that as Assembly Members they had not been included in the guest list for Princess Anne's visit to Belfast Royal Academy.

RECOMMENDATION

6. I recommend that no response be made either in public or private to the Lord Mayor but if the Lord Mayor mentions the subject at his meeting with the Secretary of State tomorrow the Secretary of State might say that he had noted the report with some surprise and that in planning Royal Visits it is our endeavour to see that, within the restraints placed on us by security, that the City of Belfast and its representatives are included in programmes as appropriate.
7. The reference in the final paragraph of the Sunday World report that the Lord Mayor is going to invite a special VIP to Belfast off his own bat is best ignored since any invitation sent direct to a member of the Royal Family or the Prime Minister will eventually come back to the Secretary of State for advice as indeed has already happened with the Lord Mayor's letter of 4 June to the Prime Minister. (Minister's case no 9487 refers)

Joan Owens

JOAN OWENS

26 June 1985

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COMPLAINT

Attributed to

1. "slighting the Lord Mayor and snubbing all the people of Belfast
2. made sure that Royal Visitors don't pay a courtesy visit to the City Hall
3. insulting the security forces but implying that they wouldn't be able to provide protection in the city centre

Councillor Hugh Smyth

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Security advice has been against VIP visits to the City Hall on the grounds of the high manpower requirement to secure the city centre and the practical problems which would be caused by bringing the traffic in the city to the complete standstill, especially in day time.

4. Staff people at Shorts were running around with itineraries of the Kents' visit even though the City Hall hadn't been furnished with the agenda.

Lord Mayor

Shorts staff had their own programme. They most certainly did not have the Royal visitors' itinerary. This office even encountered some difficulties in obtaining details of the Shorts' programme as all their senior officials were at the Paris Airshow immediately prior to the visit.

5. He (the Lord Mayor) and his wife were shunted into a portacabin at Sydenham Airport and handed coffee in plastic cups.

Lord Mayor

On arrival at Shorts air terminal the welcoming party assembled in the portacabin - the structure which is the terminal building. Coffee was served in plastic cups - which was a source of embarrassment to Shorts people. The Lord Mayor joked about the plastic cups to Mr Fell.

6. They were only trailed around at the tail of the official party.

Lord Mayor

In a Royal Visit local dignitaries are required only to meet and greet thereafter there is no role for them other than to follow the main party. Senior Shorts officials were designated to accompany the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress and others in the welcoming party but according to Mr Fell the Lord Mayor kept wandering off on his own to talk to people and therefore lost touch with his escort.

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7. They were left standing on the runway as the Kents and other dignitaries took a ride in one of Shorts' planes.

Lord Mayor

The Prince was making the flight as a result of a personal request made by him to Sir Philip Foreman. The Secretary of State as Minister in attendance accompanied the Prince. The Lord Lieutenant and everyone else awaited the return of the Prince. There would not have been room for everyone on the plane.

8. They weren't even introduced formally to the Prince and Princess.

Lord Mayor

The Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress and Town Clerk were the first three people presented immediately the Prince arrived at Shorts. It is true that they were not formally presented to the Princess. At the Garden Party outside the city boundary they were in the same position as all the other Mayors and Chairmen.

Because we are not permitted to do anything that would alert a large number of people to the likelihood of a Royal Visit it is not possible to arrange in advance to have formal presentation points as was done for the Queen's Jubilee visit in 1977. We tried this for one subsequent Royal Visit and found that people did not like being held captive at one place for most of the afternoon but preferred to be free to circulate. The more informal walkabout is preferred too by the Royal Visitors. We have already noted the Secretary of State's wish for 'prompters' to be on hand to help him on future occasions.

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