



COMPENSATION

**FROM: D A STANLEY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
3 JULY 1998**

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PS/MR INGRAM (B&L)

ASST 115/h dB
SEC - 6 JUL 1998
CENT SEC

CHURCH FIRES: 1/2 JULY 1998

Summary

The Agency now has at hand the preliminary estimates of the cost of damage resulting from the church fires around the Province on the night of 1/2 July 1998. There were nine churches damaged, totalling in the region of £1,000,000. The individual potential claims are as follows:

	Estimated Extent of Damage
Leitrim Church, Castledawson	£300,000
St James Church, Crumlin	£300,000
St Joseph's Church, Lisburn	£250,000
Sacred Heart Church, Dungannon	£75,000
Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Banbridge	£50,000
St Colmcilles Church, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast	£15,000
St Teresa's Church, Banbridge	£5000
Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tandragee	£5000
St Colman's Church, Lawrencetown	<u>£1000</u>
Total, say	£1,000, 000



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AN EXECUTIVE AGENCY WITHIN THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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2. The Agency's loss adjusters visited all sites of damage either yesterday or today and will continue to liaise with loss assessors acting on behalf of the churches to agree rebuilding plans and compensation amounts (on a "Without Prejudice" basis). As soon as liability has been established the Agency anticipates being in a position to authorise the necessary rebuilding work. Interim payments will be made as each stage of the work is completed and this will ensure that rebuilding progresses as quickly as possible.

3. The Minister will be aware that acceptance of liability under the legislation is dependant on confirmation that the damage was caused, either by three or more persons unlawfully assembled, or as a result of an act committed on behalf of, or in connection with, an unlawful association. The Agency cannot, unfortunately, authorise rebuilding work or make any interim payments until liability has been established. It seems likely, prima facie, that the Chief Constable may well, in due course, certify that the damage was indeed caused by an unlawful association, although this is, of course, a matter for the RUC.

4. Should the Minister of State wish to discuss any aspect of the compensation process in respect of these claims, I am, of course, available at any time.



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