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Reference Code: 2001/6/323

Title: Letter from Victor Beattie, secretary of the Number 3 District of the Orange Order, Raphoe, County Donegal, to Taoiseach Jack Lynch, regarding alleged comments made by a member of the government at Donegal County Council relating to Orange Order services in the county.

Creation Date(s): 2 July, 1970

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 2 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

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Magherahane,
Raphoe.
Lifford.
Co. Donegal.

2nd. July 1970.

An Taoiseach,
Mr. Jack Lynch, T.D.,
Government Buildings,
Upper Merrion Street,
DUBLIN 2.

Dear Sir,

The Officers of this No.3 District of the Orange Order (East Donegal), have asked me to write to you personally on their behalf, as a matter of urgency, concerning the statements made by a member of the Government at a meeting of the County Council in Lifford on Monday, which statements have been reported in the Press and are widely construed as a threat against the traditional Orange services in this area. Considerable unease has been stirred up on the statements in question, among all sections of the community, as they appear to be in complete contrast to the desire expressed by yourself and in which we share, that nobody should worsen the position by word or deed and nothing should be done in our country which would add to the troubles in the Six Counties or which could be used by trouble-makers there.

As you probably know, the members of this Order in this district have always been permitted to hold their Church services yearly without fear of hinderance or interuption, and indeed, when nearly 20 years ago there was one isolated instance of attempted intimidation at Lifford, the Minister for Justice then issued a ~~statement~~ categorical assurance that this would not be tolerated. Furthur, a service is held yearly by the members of the Order in the South-West district of the county, at Rossnowlagh, each 12th. July, which is conducted as a religious service and not a political one, and is regarded as an attraction to the many tourists from across the border and elsewhere who stay in that area. In the editorial of the Irish Press yesterday, which is a very fair and accurate comment, this factor is realised and it is only to be hoped that the Editor's comments will to some extent help to remedy the damage done to community relations.

We, as law abiding citizens, discussed this matter at a meeting last night, and it was recognised that if under the threats voiced on Monday last, we asked the local Lodges to call off the traditional

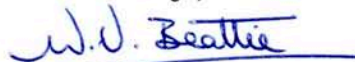
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Church services and not to turn out on Monday, 13th. July to attend the usual venues, we would be playing into the hands of extremists and acting completely contrary to your own expressed wish that things should be allowed to continue normally, which wish we believe has the support of almost everyone in this area. The impression to be given from such action on our part would be most damaging, and would imply that a minority here was forced by intimidation to stand down. If the Government prohibits our customary services then we will certainly accept the prohibition and the motives which compel it. However, as matters stand, we can only appeal to yourself as the head of our Government, to see that steps are taken to afford protection to us. The Gardai authorities are already aware that a Church Service is being held on Sunday, 7th. July, at Manorcunningham, and are also aware of the exact position regarding the Lodges here which will turn out on Monday, 13th July in the usual way. I understand that consequent on the events of Monday last, the authorities are aware of threats which have been made to interfere with the Church service on Sunday.

We therefore appeal to you to take whatever action is necessary in this matter, resting assured of the co-operation of all members of our Order in this District, in the desire that the good relations which distinguish this area should be maintained.

In the circumstances an early reply would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Victor Beattie (Secretary)