

PA-610/PA

DB/16/3

FROM: MRS DOREEN BROWN
CENT SEC
DATE: 14 MARCH 1997

cc PS/Sir John Wheeler (DFP, B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Loughran
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Hill - B
Mr Canavan
Mrs McAuley

ASST/ SEC 136/3
13 MAR 1997
C.C.R.U.

Mr Canavan 18/3
Mrs McAuley 18/3

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L) - B

In Review.
Harry this is suis. 18/3

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY

1. The Very Rev Dr John Dunlop, Co-Convenor of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Church and Government Committee, wrote to the Secretary of State on 24 February giving details of two resolutions which were passed at a recent meeting of the Ballymena Presbytery. These resolutions relate principally to the Harryville situation and trading boycotts.
2. Ballymena Presbytery has some 30 congregations including one at Harryville. It is likely that the first resolution relating to Harryville has been diluted by balancing references to boycotts and reflects a more reasoned response from the clergy. This may reflect liberal/fundamentalist divisions within the Presbytery. Dr Dunlop was obliged to inform the Secretary of State of these resolutions as Co-Convenor of the Church and Government Committee. However, in a recent conversation with Mr Maccabe (PAB), Dr Dunlop distanced himself from their content, with which he was not fully in accord. These resolutions do not come therefore with the full authority and approval of the Presbyterian Church but reflect rather a local Presbytery viewpoint.

ID/RC/22447

3. It is important that the Government does not equate Church blockades with boycotts, as this resolution appears to do, and the response to Dr Dunlop therefore deals with these issues separately. Both blockades and boycotts are manifestations of sectarianism and should be condemned but neither explains or justifies the other.
4. The second resolution, calling for a Government investigation of trading boycotts to ascertain measures to lessen their impact, is reminiscent of approaches from Unionist representatives to introduce some system of financial compensation. This proposal has repeatedly been rejected and the draft reply explains that the position is continuing to be monitored.
5. A letter for the signature of the Secretary of State is attached.

[Signed: DAB]

D A BROWN

DRAFT LETTER FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S SIGNATURE

The Very Rev John Dunlop DD
Co-Convenor Church and Government Committee
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
17 Innisfayle Park
BELFAST
BT15 5HS

March 1997

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY

Thank you for your letter of 24 February 1997 which conveyed to me the resolutions of the Ballymena Presbytery on the Church blockade at Harryville and trade boycotts. The Government has condemned these and other manifestations of sectarianism. All such activities cause real harm to community relations, business prospects and Northern Ireland's image.

I am pleased to see that the Ballymena Presbytery has endorsed the actions of Ministers who have stood up for the right of their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens to attend their place of worship without molestation. The Presbytery has added its voice to the broad range of opinion across the community which has denounced this activity. The Mayor of Ballymena and other prominent Unionists have been to the fore in making their position known on this important moral issue.

The Police have maintained a substantial presence at the church in Harryville since the protests started and have ensured that those protesting are kept well away from the church premises, so that worshippers can have free access to and from their chosen place of worship.

The resolutions also deal with economic boycotts. Though there is considerable evidence that these have diminished since last Autumn, I am conscious of the impact on individual traders and of the persistence of the phenomenon in a small number of locations. Boycotting has been condemned by leading representatives of the

Nationalist community and of the Roman Catholic Church including Cardinal Daly, and Sean Farren, the SDLP's economy spokesperson.

The resolutions also suggested that the Government should investigate the effect of boycotts, with a view to taking measures to lessen the impact. Since last Autumn Michael Ancram has held a series of meetings with those directly affected by boycotts, their political representatives and trade organisations. The Government has also received a report on boycotting from the Standing Committee of the Northern Ireland Forum. We have also taken other steps to ascertain the extent of boycotts, despite the fact that rumour and reticence have made this a particularly difficult task. The position will continue to be monitored closely. By its nature, boycotting is difficult to counteract directly, unless intimidation or violence is used, in which circumstances the police will act appropriately.

I am grateful to the Ballymena Presbytery for their deliberations on these sensitive issues and to you for informing me of them.

610/94.

URGENT

Secretary of State's / Minister's Case

ASST/
SEC
20 FEB 1997
C.C.R.U.

Reference SOS 138/97

Raised By V REV JOHN DUNLOP DD

Subject RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE
 BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY

Action Required

1. Please provide advice and draft reply for Secretary of State's signature no later than 13/03/97.

2. Draft reply to be provided to both Belfast and London Private Offices by:

1. Mrs Brown

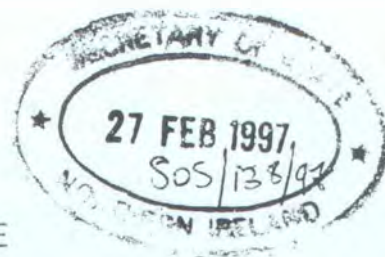
3. Reply to be co-ordinated with **MRS BROWN**

4. Circulated to:

PS/Secretary of State (B)	PS/Secretary of State (L)	PS/Sir John Wheeler (B)
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L)	PS/Sir David Fell	Mr Watkins
Mr Canavan	Mr Hill	Mr Maccabe
Mr Perry	Mr Brooker	

Referred To	Date	Referred To	Date
Mrs Brown	27/02/97		

Mr Canavan
Chuckles file.



CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Co-Convener (NI): V Rev John Dunlop DD, 17 Innisfayle Park, Belfast BT15 5HS Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1232 77 81 64
Convener (RoI): Mr George McCullagh, 'On a Clear Day', Ballyedmonduff Road, Kiltiernan, Co Dublin Tel: +353 (0)1 29 54 182

Sir Patrick Mayhew,
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,
Stormont Castle,
Belfast.

24 February 1997

Dear Sir Patrick,

It is the practice of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that resolutions for the attention of either Government should be transmitted through the Conveners of the Church and Government Committee. In my capacity as co convener of the Committee I would like to draw your attention to the following resolutions which were passed at a recent meeting of the Ballymena Presbytery.

1. That the Presbytery of Ballymena desires that all its members show tolerance and respect to the minority community within its bounds and commends the actions of those ministers who by their presence outside the Roman Catholic church at Harryville showed their willingness to defend the right of freedom of worship of the minority community even though they would disagree with the form and content of Roman catholic worship. However Presbytery is disappointed that opportunities have been missed in areas where Roman Catholics are in the majority for community leaders to show support to beleaguered boycotted Protestant traders.

2. That Government investigate the effect of trading boycotts upon minority communities to ascertain what measures can be taken to lessen its impact.

With thanks for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

John Dunlop.

cc Rev. David Bell, Belfast (SD) Tel: +44 (0)1232 22 22 84, Fax: +44 (0)1232 22 60 09
Rev. David Bell, Belfast (SD) Tel: +44 (0)1232 22 22 84, Fax: +44 (0)1232 22 60 09

This Committee represents the General Assembly in matters between the Church and Government authorities and in other matters of public interest