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FLAGS AND BUNTINGS AT BACON FACTORY IN BALLYMONEY

1. John Dallat, one of the two SDLP Councillors on Coleraine Council rang me this morning to say that telegraph poles outside the Lovell and Christmas Bacon Factory at Agivey near Ballymoney had been decorated with loyalist flags and buntings over the weekend. The 120-member workforce is roughly half Catholic and the Catholic employees are refusing to go into the factory while the flags and buntings remain in place. The factory has two entrances and both are decorated, together with the space between them. Dallat is concerned about the Catholic employees who are probably on weak ground (strictly speaking) for withholding their labour and who could possibly lose their jobs. It is alleged that police caught six people putting up the buntings but this has not been confirmed.

2. The management feel that they cannot become directly involved in the dispute since the decorations are outside the factory premises. The telegraph poles legally belong to British Telecom and Dallat's feeling is that Telecom have to be the people to take down the buntings. On at least one occasion last year (that Dallat can recall) they did so. Dallat was about to contact Telecom but rang us first to let us know what was happening and to ask us to do what we could.

3. It would seem that we should contact the Secretariat as a matter of urgency and ask that they raise the case with the other side with a view to having British Telecom remove the flags and buntings as soon as possible.

T. Russell
4 July 1988

*Mr Russell informed C O'Flaherty of this further information; Workforce went sack at 1.30 pm but will stay out tomorrow if the bunting is not taken down. Dallat spoke to British Telecom who do not get involved. Dallat has also spoken to Lewin, the RUC inspector in Coleraine ^{RUC} inclined to hands off attitude. Understand Catholics are 60% of a workforce of 200. *R. Long 4/7/88**