

15 JUL 1988

*M. Longman*

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11 JUL 1988  
3148  
Dept of the Environment

HCS/7/23

- cc: PS/Ministers (B & L) - 1-1
- PS/PUS (B & L) - 1-1
- Mr Burns - 1-1
- Mr A W Stephens
- NI Perm Secs
- Mr Spence
- Mr Chesterton - 1-1
- Mr Miles -
- Mr Kirk - 1-1
- Mr J McConnell
- Mr Bell - 1-1
- Mr S Hewitt
- Mr J A Daniell
- Mr Wood

- 1. Secretary
  - 2. Mr Crowther
- cc Under Secretaries*

*W. Daniell*

PS/Secretary of State (B & L) - 1-1

**POLITICAL PROTEST ACTION**

- 1. This paper advises the Secretary of State of the position on Unionist protest action at the end of June 1988.

**ISSUES SUBJECT TO MINISTERIAL DISCRETION**

- 2. Membership of Boards:
  - 2.1 Education and Library Boards:
    - 2.1.1 Business continues to be conducted without disruption in all the Education and Library Boards and no further vacancies have arisen as a result of political protest. Appendix A(i) lists the total vacancies.
  - 2.2 Health and Social Services Boards
    - 2.2.1 The Department has written to Craigavon Borough Council requesting nominations to fill the vacancy created by the dismissal of Mr Cairns and the

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existing vacancy. All vacancies are listed in Appendix A(ii).

2.3 Northern Ireland Housing Executive:

2.3.1 No change reported this month.

2.4 Fire Authority for Northern Ireland

2.4.1 No change reported this month.

ISSUES SUBJECT TO NORMAL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

3. Non-payment of Public Debt:

3.1 Motor Tax:

3.1.1 Mr J Nicholson, former MP, has now been interviewed by the RUC and papers are being prepared at present to bring this case to Court (he was offered a mitigated penalty of £235 following the unlicensed use of a vehicle on 4 February 1988). The Court action will probably take place in late August or September. After taking advice from the Office of the DPP, it is proposed to treat Mr Nicholson as an ordinary member of the public and avoid involving the DPP in the prosecution since Mr Nicholson is no longer an MP and the magistrates are now well used to Political Protest cases and are unlikely to be disturbed by anything which might be brought forward. The Vehicle Licensing Central Office (VLCO) has received a further report from the RUC of the unlicensed use of Mr Nicholson's vehicle on 6 May 1988. A letter offering Mr Nicholson a mitigated penalty of £48 in respect of this offence was issued on 24 June 1988.

3.1.2 The Secretary of State may wish to note that a case against Mrs Robinson (wife of Mr Peter Robinson MP) for non-payment of Motor Tax has been set for hearing before Castlereagh Magistrates Court on 15 July.

3.2 Television Licences:

3.2.1 The position remains unchanged.

3.3 District Council Issues:

3.3.1 Services are being provided in all Council areas.

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3.3.2 All 26 Councils have held their annual election to appoint a Chairman/Mayor. The significant results concern Sinn Fein. They have been ousted from the Chair in Omagh and Fermanagh but have been elected in Strabane.

3.3.3 The bomb outrage in Lisburn is likely to cause further problems over the presence of Sinn Fein in the Council Chamber.

3.3.4 The present position in relation to "Says No" banners is that of the 14 Councils originally displaying banners:-

- a. Seven Councils (Antrim, Ballymena, Banbridge, Craigavon, Newtownabbey, North Down and Lisburn) have removed them. Lisburn Council submitted an application for permission for a sign, but a notice of intention to refuse permission went to and was accepted by the Council on 6 June. A formal decision to refuse planning permission issued on 28 June 1988.
- b. Three Councils (Belfast, Castlereagh and Limavady) have removed their banners to positions where they are not in breach of the Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations.
- c. Temporary permission granted to Ards Council for a banner at a new location on the Council Offices expired on 30 June. If the banner remains on display, the Council will be asked to remove it.
- d. Planning permission for the Cookstown banner was refused and the Council was asked to remove the banner forthwith. The Council decided to appeal. A request for prosecution proceedings to be initiated has been issued to the Department's solicitors.
- e. Prosecution proceedings are under way against 2 Councils (Carrickfergus and Larne).

3.4 Public Order Issues:

3.4.1 As reported last month, Dr Paisley declared he will go to prison rather than pay a fine imposed for a public order offence; apart from that, the position remains unchanged.

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4. The Secretary of State is asked to:-

- i note the latest position in each of the areas;
- ii agree that no further action should be taken to fill vacancies on public bodies.

*K.P. Bloomfield*

K P BLOOMFIELD

8 July 1988

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APPENDIX A (I)

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS

**Belfast**

12 vacancies, of which 4 are disqualifications for non-attendance.

**South Eastern**

2 vacancies, 1 of which is a disqualification for non-attendance.

**North Eastern**

1 vacancy

**Southern**

No vacancies

**Western**

No vacancies

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APPENDIX A (ii)

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARDS

**Eastern Board**

6 vacancies

**Northern Board**

1 vacancy

**Southern Board**

2 vacancies