

Mr. Blaney  
Re: Blaney Kennedy file  
J.W. 6/5/88

copy for  
Short file

S18 PC 6/5/88

1 HR  
A. Croft  
Mr. Wadsworth

SHORTS

J. Kennedy cc

Secretary  
Mr Gibson (o/r)  
Mr Carvill ✓  
Mr Gowdy  
Mr Leach, SIL  
Mr Murphy  
MC

TO: PS/MR VIGGERS (B&L)

SHORTS - CONGRESSMAN KENNEDY

The Minister will wish to see the attached copy letter from Mr Roberts of Shorts to Congressman Kennedy. This letter issued on 11 April, shortly after Mr Kennedy's well publicised visit, though I have just received the copy.

M A Warnock.

M A WARNOCK  
Industrial Support Division I

5 May 1988

# SHORTS

SILENT COPY: MR M A WARNOCK - DED

RWRMcN/3.5.88

3228W - 3/5/88

W 3.5.88

afcr/dwh/1040

11 April 1988

Hon Joseph P Kennedy II  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1631 Longworth Building  
WASHINGTON DC 20515

Dear Congressman Kennedy

We were pleased to have the opportunity to receive you at our premises on April 6th and grateful that you were able to take the time to view our presentations on the Company's activities and on our Fair Employment and Affirmative Action Programmes.

We were however, very concerned that media reports of your subsequent 'press interview' following your visit gave the impression that you had misunderstood two points which were discussed during your briefing and we believe that in view of the importance of these issues, it is essential that the record be set straight on each of them.

Specifically, you said that Shorts Management had told you that the Government's proposed new legislation applying to Fair Employment in Northern Ireland would not have any effect and secondly, you charged that the Company had not honoured a commitment made to the former Speaker, Tip O'Neill, to open a factory in West Belfast and to employ a significant number of Catholics there.

Dealing with the first issue both I, and my colleague Brian Carlin who responded to your question about the likely effect of the Government's proposed new legislation, are completely clear that your question, raised in the context of Shorts Affirmative Actions Programme, was asking what effect the new legislation would have at Shorts. As you may recall, Brian Carlin had previously shown on one of the last slides of his presentation, that we are currently extending the monitoring and recording procedures to internal transfers and promotions (a requirement to be introduced by the new proposed legislation) and we have also prepared a Declaration of Protection which declares the commitment of both the Company and the Trade Unions to an intimidation-free environment for all in our work-place.

In response to your question, Brian stated that these are likely to be the only two changes which the new legislation will require in Shorts, and he made this comment against the background which he had earlier stressed, i.e. that we at Shorts are already doing these things and that the Company is the leader in the Province in Equality of Opportunity

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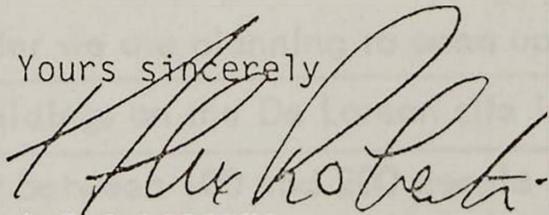
Continuation

practices in industry, and that Shorts is already doing almost all that will be required, and in some ways more than even the new legislation will require employers to do. Thus, when he replied that the new legislation will not have any effect, he was very clearly specifically referring to Shorts. We believe that you were quite incorrect to suggest that we were commenting on the new legislation in any broader sense, and would ask you to note this in any future references which you choose to make to that exchange. For the record, it is in fact our view that the new legislation will have a very significant effect on the proportion of Catholics in employment in the Province.

On the second point regarding our Factory in West Belfast, and your Administrative Assistant's charge that we had failed to honour an obligation given to Speaker O'Neill, I have to tell you that I was astonished and very disappointed by your comments. I am sure you recall that when we were challenged on this issue during the briefing, I very clearly explained to you that we had never made any such commitment to Tip O'Neill. I indicated to you that the idea to open a Factory in West Belfast came about as the result of internal dialogue within Shorts, that we spoke widely to the media at the time detailing precisely what we hoped to achieve and when, (a copy is attached). We acknowledged that it had gone more slowly than we had expected initially, due to an inter-union dispute about trade union representation, but that this dispute had now been resolved and we are now on track to achieve the employment goals we set ourselves.

Obviously, in this world of instant comment and instant reporting of same, the damage which has been caused to us over both these issues cannot be undone, but nevertheless I believe that it is vital that the record is set straight on these two issues and, to the extent that you are able to help correct the wrong impressions which have been created, I shall be grateful if you will use your good offices to bring these facts to the appropriate people's attention.

Yours sincerely



A F C ROBERTS  
SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR

Extract of speech delivered by Sir Philip Foreman Chairman, Short Brothers PLC at the U.S. Air Force C23A Roll Out Ceremony on Wednesday 8th August 1984.

The significance of the work which this order brings to the Province cannot be stressed too highly, and in this respect it may be appropriate to quote just one sentence from President Reagan's speech on St Patrick's Day 1983 -

"Next to peace and reconciliation, Northern Ireland's greatest need is for jobs to bring hope and opportunity to all its people, especially the young".

The manufacture of these aircraft will provide employment for some 1,000 people in Shorts alone together with a significant spin-off of jobs into the industrial and commercial infrastructure through local suppliers of goods and services to the company and its employees.

In this respect, we have always recognised that we have a responsibility to provide equality of job opportunity to all sections of the community. We already have factories at Castlereagh, Newtownards and Crossgar in addition to those on our main site here at Queen's Island, and as a result of the work associated with this order we are planning to open up a modest production unit in one of the smaller buildings on the De Lorean site in West Belfast. This will provide job opportunities for between 100 and 200 people living in that area and we shall scrupulously apply the same rules there as we do in all our other plants of recruiting on merit those people who are most competent to do the work.