

CONFIDENTIAL: APPOINTMENTS

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
STORMONT CASTLE
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast (01232) 520700

*For context Announced on 26/3
File
John 27/3.*

John Holmes Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

25 March 1997

Dear John,

My Secretary of State's announcement in the House on 30 January outlined the Government's response to the Report of the Independent Review of Parades and Marches (the North Report) and, in particular, the proposal to establish an independent Parades Commission with a mediation, conciliation and education role.

Sir Patrick planned to have a Commission in place in advance of this year's marching season and proposes to issue a Press statement announcing the appointment of the Chairman (Mr Alistair Graham) and four members on 26 March: a copy of the press release providing details of the appointments is attached.

The process of identifying a Chairman with the right blend of skills, experience and background who would be willing to serve in this high profile and possibly contentious role has taken longer than we had hoped: a number of candidates felt unable to accept the offer for a variety of reasons. However, the Secretary of State is convinced that Mr Graham is almost ideal for the job, and embodies all the

CONFIDENTIAL: APPOINTMENTS

CONFIDENTIAL: APPOINTMENTS



competences necessary to make a success of it. I should add that the Opposition have indicated their agreement to the establishment of the Commission and to the appointments.

I am sending copies of this letter for information to the Private Secretaries of Members of NI and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever,
Ken

W K LINDSAY

CONFIDENTIAL: APPOINTMENTS

BB/SOFS/30533