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From the Private Secretary

19 June 1997

Dear Councillor Tweed,

During the Prime Minister's visit to Northern Ireland on 16 May you handed me a letter about an Apprentice Boys Parade in Dunloy on 18 May. I am sorry it has taken so long to reply.

The Prime Minister fully understands the depth and sincerity of views which are held on the parades issue by many people across Northern Ireland. He believes that these views can only be reconciled through local accommodation and agreement. It is essential that each group involved in contentious parades listens to the views of others and responds constructively. Both residents and marchers have a great deal to gain from this.

Local accommodation and agreement is also the central message of the North report. The Parades Commission which emerged from that report has a valuable role to play. The Government hopes all concerned will use its offices to assist in finding solutions.

I know you will have been disappointed by what happened in Dunloy on 18 May. But the RUC must be in the lead on the operational handling of individual parades and make final decisions on public order grounds. I am in no doubt that the RUC carries out its responsibilities in an impartial way and pursues those, from whatever section of the community, who break the law.

Yours sincerely
John Holmes

JOHN HOLMES

Councillor David Tweed

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