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PSMS

Please see across a draft letter for the Minister of State's signature which was prepared by A/Sec Gallagher. This letter is in response to the recent letter to the Minister of State from Mr O' Murchu, a copy of which is also across.

Brendan McMahon
Anglo-Irish Division
18 June 1990



OIFIG AN AIRE STÁIT AG AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ ÉACHTRACHA
(Office of the Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs)

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
(Dublin 2)

18 June 1990.

Conchur Ó Murchú, Uas.,
"Rosbeg",
Bishopstown,
Cork.

A dhuine uasail,

I am very grateful for your letter of 8th May and your remarks about my meeting with the delegation on the Crossmaglen Club issue.

You can be fully assured that all aspects of the Club's case are of the deepest concern to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to myself. In fact, at a meeting in London on Monday evening, the Minister raised the situation of the Club grounds with the Secretary of State, Peter Brooke. Mr. Brooke agreed with the Minister's view that they should have an early and comprehensive report before them which would enable all outstanding aspects of the question to be considered. They have, therefore, instructed the Secretariat in Belfast to prepare the required report as a matter of urgency.

You and your colleagues can also be assured that the issue of harassment, which is of course of the greatest concern to the nationalist community, has the highest priority in the work of the Conference and Secretariat. Any report of harassment of nationalists which we receive is taken up immediately in the Secretariat and is pursued vigorously. And the Conference itself, which is co-chaired by the Minister and the Secretary of State, reviews the situation on harassment on a regular basis.

Le gach dea-mhéin.

Sean Calleary, T. D.,
Minister for State.

Telephone 021/541979

"Rosbeg",
Bishopstown,
Cork

8th May, 1990.

Sean Uas. Mac Giolla Laoire T.D.,
Aire Stait,
Department for Foreign Affairs,
80 St. Stephen's Green,
Baile Atha Cliath 2.

RECEIVED

9 MAY 1990

MINISTERS OFFICE

A Aire, A Chara,

Re/ Crossmaglen Grounds

Sincere thanks for meeting the recent deputation concerning the Crossmaglen Grounds problem and for showing a keen anxiety to assist in the matter of any problems arising from Planning Permission for the erection of the clubs new Social Centre and indeed your interest in endeavouring to secure a meeting with the local Housing Executive regarding the overall development of the grounds. Your advise regarding the latter was also appreciated and is being acted on.

I regret however, as Chairman of the committee that I left our Meeting with you with the distinct impression that you had very little interest in the general occupation of the Grounds and the frustration and annoyance etc caused to the club, or at least it is very low on the Agenda. I got the impression that my raising the question of taking up the question of an alternative right of way should the building of the Social Centre be proceeded with which would eliminate the existing right of way requisitioned by the British Army was to an extent irritating you and was a nuisance at that point. While I or any other member of our Committee do not wish to do anything that would hinder proceeding with the erection of the Social Centre or arriving at a situation where the grounds can be developed, there is no question about it that the existing occupation and the very live possibility of an alternative right of way being requisitioned by the British Army within the Grounds is a serious and provocative issue which we would generally expect to be tackled seriously and urgently by your goodself and indeed the Minister himself and your officials to avoid any further aggravation of the local club and community and indeed avoid any further difficulties being created for the club by the British Army.

In this respect and to emphasise how urgently necessary this is, I must draw your attention to the serious and dangerous action of the British Army recently and respectfully request that you take the matter up with the appropriate Authorities as a matter of urgency as well as pressing the overall issue.

On Tuesday 1/5/90 at 8.05p.m. when the Crossmaglen adult players were training on the main grounds, a Juvenile Under 12 Football Game, Crossmaglen ✓ Mullabawn was in progress on the second ground nearby a British Army Helicopter flew over the adult players at a height of 7' to 8' and continued over the

/over.....

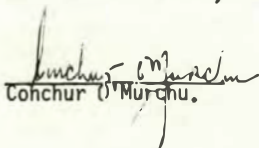
Juvenile Players at a height 5' to 6'. The Helicopter returned in 25 minutes and flew so low as to force all the under 12 players to dive to the ground. Locals who saw this have reported to me through Mr. Gene Larkin that this was one of the worst and most dangerous occurrences in twenty years.

You and your officials with our Minister Gearoid Uas O'Coileain T.D. are the people we rely on to stop this and if using the Anglo-Irish Secretariat you do not succeed the whole question of it being a meaningful arrangement to resolve difficulties of the Nationalist population must be called into question. In fact I am informed that apart from Crossmaglen club at all there is considerable harassment of people in the six counties at the moment. I have no specific instances but I understand such incidents as ~~down~~ ^{drawn} to your attention by our Uachtaran when we meet are typical.

It is any wonder then that we are disappointed and frustrated at the lack of interest when we meet in the deeper issues of occupation, the new right of way and harassment.

Please Minister, we need your reassurance on these issues by taking appropriate prompt, determined action to resolve them

Mise le Fíor Mheas,


Conchur O'Murchu.