

CONFIDENTIAL

1. SECRETARY

2. MR GLOVER

HCS/5/54

FROM: SIR KENNETH BLOOMFIELD
DATE: 14 MAY 1990

cc. PS/Ministers (B&L)
PS/PUS (B&L)
Mr Burns
Mr Ledlie
NI Perm Secs
Mr Thomas
Mr Alston
Mr Hill
Mr J McConnell
Mr Blackwell
Mr Bell
Mr J A Daniell
Mr Wood
Miss Steele

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L)

POLITICAL PROTEST ACTION

1. Since August 1987 the Secretary of State has been advised on a monthly basis of the state of play on the continuing political protest action by Unionists against the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This paper reflects the position on Unionist protest at the end of April 1990. More importantly, it also seeks the Secretary of State's agreement to ending the production of the report (paragraph 7 refers).

2. Public Bodies

2.1 Education and Library Boards

2.1.1 Business continues to be conducted without disruption in all the Education and Library Boards.

2.2 Health and Social Services Boards

2.2.1 Business continues to be conducted without disruption in the Health and Social Services Boards.

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16 MAY 1990

Dept of the Environment

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- 2.2.2 Four Unionist Councillors on the Eastern Board and three on the Southern Board did not attend the April meetings but there is no indication that any of these absences are related to a renewal of protest action. Both Dr Brownlees (Ballymena BC) and Mrs Gilliland (Newtownabbey BC) have been absent from the Northern Board meetings for more than 6 months. The Board, which did not meet in April, has been asked to take the action necessary in these circumstances.

3. **Non Payment of Public Debt**

3.1 **Television Licences**

- 3.1.1 Mr Ken Maginnis remains the only MP reported to be without a TV licence. A court hearing on the matter scheduled for early January was delayed due to a technicality and a new date has yet to be fixed. Post Office officials however, have reason to believe Mr Maginnis may soon purchase a licence and the case may not come to court.

3.2 **Rates**

- 3.2.1 A schedule of MPs/MEPs with outstanding rates, and those in arrears is at Annex A.

4. **District Council Issues**

- 4.1 The SDLP won the by-election on 29 March in Cookstown. The Council is now split 50/50 with the power of casting vote resting with the DUP Chairman.
- 4.2 There has been a quiet response to the Minister's (Mr Bottomley) announcement about Government's intention to proceed with the drafting of a new piece of local government legislation which will include compulsory competitive tendering.

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4.3

A number of meetings have taken place or are scheduled to take place between deputations from district councils, including Unionist-controlled councils and Ministers. A deputation from Belfast City Council, for example, is to meet Mr Needham to discuss the Council's Conference/concert hall project.

5.

Protest Banners

5.1

The present position in relation to "Says No" banners is that of the 14 councils originally displaying banners which required consent under the Control of Advertisements Regulations:-

- a. 4 councils (Banbridge, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down) have removed them;
- b. 6 councils (Belfast, Castlereagh, Craigavon, Limavady, Antrim and Ards) have removed them to positions where they are not in breach of the Regulations;
- c. the Planning Appeals Commission has given consent under the Regulations for the display of the Cookstown banner which is located in an inconspicuous position;
- d. Larne Council is to consider the Department's refusal at its meeting on 8 May before deciding on any removal action;
- e. Ballymena Council has withdrawn its application for planning permission and an application for temporary permission is expected; and
- f. planning approval for the Carrickfergus Council banner has been granted, since its present site is relatively inconspicuous and its effect on the visual amenity of the area is minimal.

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6. Public Order Issues

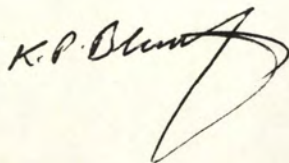
- 6.1 There have been no convictions for offences under the Public Order (NI) Order in the month of April.

7. Future Production of the Report

- 7.1 With the passage of time the Unionist protest has withered to the point where it is of little practical consequence. As a result recent monthly reports have contained little of significance. Unless we are satisfied that the report is of practical value, which I now doubt, there is no point in burdening Departments with its production or busy Ministers and senior officials with reading it. In these circumstances the Secretary of State may conclude that future production of the monthly report on political protest action does not represent a cost effective use of resources.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Secretary of State is invited to note the latest position.
- 8.2 The Secretary of State is also invited to agree that further reports are no longer required.

**K P BLOOMFIELD**

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1989/1990 RATES OUTSTANDING

NAME OF MP/MEP	AMOUNT DUE
	£
P Robinson (office)	8.00
W Ross	16.00
M Smyth	12.00
J Nicholson	12.00

The balance remaining for the above ratepayers' accounts will be carried forward as arrears in the 1990/91 year.

The outstanding rate account for the Sinn Fein office at 51 Falls Road Belfast, has now been paid.