

Tuesday - 9 July 1996

CURRENT SITUATION IN THE PROVINCE

STATEMENT BY THE CHURCH OF IRELAND PRIMATE,
THE MOST REVEREND DR ROBIN EAMES,
WHO WAS IN DRUMCREE THROUGHOUT YESTERDAY,
MONDAY 8 JULY.

1. Having talked and listened at great length to those involved in the current impasse at Drumcree I am fully aware of the depth of their feeling at this time. I understand the fears being expressed and the resentment felt by those who perceive that their current attitude must be one of determination to remain where they are. I also appreciate the efforts being made to observe the sanctity of church property. They view their current protest as part of a wider picture in which the perception is that their rights and their ethos have been eroded by events far removed from Drumcree.
2. I am also aware of the feelings currently being expressed by the Garvaghy Road Residents Association.
3. I regret that so far no accommodation of these conflicting views has been possible for I believe some way must be found in which the rights, ethos and privileges of both communities are treated equally and fairly if this Province is to look forward to any degree of stability in the future.
4. Drumcree is a part of a wider problem and it cannot be separated from it. The real question is how do we as a community reach a point in which there is a realistic recognition of the just rights to celebrate and observe religious and civic freedom on the part of both traditions.

5. That point will never be reached through violence or destruction of lives or property. What we have witnessed over-night across this Province can achieve nothing but if continued will push us all back into a nightmare we prayed had been left behind us.

 6. At this time every word and action must be measured carefully and every opportunity seized to reach agreement which will allow the freedom of expression and parity of esteem we all seek to become a reality.

 7. I appeal to everyone to resist the temptation to fall into the trap of violent words or actions which will delete the legitimacy of protest on either side. I therefore make an earnest appeal for calm and reasonableness at this time.
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