

Original - KR



Ireland VIB
CCNIO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 July 1980

Dear Mrs. Rayill,

Thank you for your letter.

I can imagine the grief which you feel for the loss of your son William and I send you my deepest sympathy. Your son was playing a vital part in the difficult and dangerous work of enforcing law and order in Northern Ireland. He met his death while fulfilling the most fundamental role of a policeman - answering a plea for help. I know that words are a poor consolation for his death. But I assure you that his colleagues in the police will pursue those who murdered him with the utmost determination. As you no doubt know, one man has already been charged with the crime and is in custody awaiting trial.

The Government are full of admiration for the policemen and soldiers who are helping us to achieve our objective - the end of terrorism and the return of normal peaceful conditions throughout Northern Ireland. We have repeatedly pledged our full support to them; and I do so again to you. We encourage them to use whatever methods will be most effective, so long as they are within the law, to thwart terrorist attacks and to arrest those who are responsible for these crimes. Slowly but surely they are making progress.

/I am

JS

I am so sorry that you feel personally affected by the cuts in public expenditure which are necessary if we are to get the economy right once more and so look forward to a better future. Economic conditions are serious not only in the United Kingdom but worldwide; and the Government is obliged to take many difficult decisions in the best interests of all our citizens. We realise that these will cause hardship for people and we are taking special measures where we can to try to minimise this. And we have gone a long way towards protecting the police and the Army against the financial cutbacks because of the importance which we attach to the maintenance of law and order.

Thank you once more for writing to me. I repeat that my colleagues and I are determined that the people of Northern Ireland will live free from the fear, suffering and destruction caused by terrorists, which they have borne so courageously for so long. We will maintain our support for the policemen and soldiers, who, like your son, are making possible the realisation of this goal.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Doherty

Mrs F M Magill