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to Blackpool  
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PRIME MINISTER

As you know, as well as seeing and hearing from the police in the areas affected by the recent riots, I have also had some frank, and on the whole, constructive discussion with responsible members of the ethnic minority communities. I am talking about people who, like members of the Lambeth Police/Community Liaison Group, have worked with determination, sometimes at great personal risk, to defuse tensions and promote better relationships.

In such discussion I have emphasised the point, not infrequently made in speeches by Home Office Ministers, that, as a Government, we are firmly opposed to racial discrimination in all its forms, that we are concerned to see that effective action is taken to deal with racial disadvantage where it can be shown to exist, and that for us there are no second class citizens. Even where there is discrimination or disadvantage there can of course be no excuse for the disgraceful scenes which we have seen on our streets in recent weeks. That must be a recurrent theme in our public statements. The horrendous events in Tottenham underscore this point. Regrettably the impression I have received in a number of different ways in recent days is that there is a belief among the ethnic minority groups - including the responsible, law abiding thinkers - that we do not care.

Nothing could more effectively deal with doubts about our commitment as a Government to the welfare of all our citizens or about our opposition to discrimination in all its forms than some words from you as Prime Minister. This point was put to me, in terms, only last week by ethnic minority representatives at a meeting of my Advisory Council on Race Relations. I wonder if you might find some opportunity to do this - perhaps even in your speech to the Party Conference this week. The theme is perhaps best put in a positive way - that the law and the police and all the agencies of Government are there to protect and serve everyone without distinction or discrimination because that is the only basis for a civilised and successful society.

You will remember David Waddingham's admirable speech on the Gallolzo motion two years ago. He has put together the Enclosed to illustrate what you might perhaps say this time.

Doyle Fund.

4 October 1985

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There must be few in this Hall who have not been greatly troubled by what has happened recently in the Lozells Road area of Handsworth, Brixton and most recently in Tottenham. Douglas Hurd has made it abundantly plain that riot and looting will not be tolerated and there can be no excuse for what occurred. But I want to take the opportunity to say this. Britain is now a country in which live people who have come here or whose parents have come here from all over the world. We have got to make sure that out of these different people we make One Nation - bound together by a common loyalty to Queen and Country. All these different people are equal before the law with the same rights and the same duties as everyone else: and each of these people, every man, woman and child is entitled to that equality of opportunity which is the hall-mark of Conservatism. That must mean - that does mean that our Party is wholly opposed to discrimination on grounds of colour, race or creed and where it exists we will fight it with all the energy in our beings.