

PRIME MINISTERMEETING WITH LORD ABERDARE AT 0900 ON WEDNESDAY 15 MAY

At the meeting with the Football Authorities on 1 April, you said that you would be arranging to see the Chairman of the Football Trust, Lord Aberdare.

Following the Bradford tragedy, this meeting has assumed a fresh importance. We heard today that the Chairman of the Football Grounds Improvement Trust, Tom Wharton, will be accompanying Lord Aberdare. Neil Macfarlane will be joining you and, we expect, Giles Shaw.

You will wish to open the meeting by thanking the Chairmen for the valuable contribution their Trusts have already made, and to express the hope ^{that} they will be able to play a significant part in the implementation of the further measures the Football Authorities have agreed to take.

The Home Secretary's statement announcing that designation under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act will be extended to Divisions 3 and 4 is likely to be a major item in the Chairmen's minds. They will ask for more resources from Government, if not directly, then through a reduction in betting duty. You will wish to remind them of last year's £3.3 million underspend (Tim Flesher's briefing at Flag A).

Other briefing attached:

Flag B A list of points you will wish to cover with the Chairmen.

Flag C A background paper on the Football Trust and the Football Grounds Improvement Trust.

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Flag D The Home Secretary's statement.

Flag E Your letter to Mr. Millichip, after the 1 April meeting.

Flag F A note from Bernard Ingham reporting a telephone call with the Football Trust. This simply confirms their claim for a reduction in the pool betting duty.

Neil Macfarlane has just received the Football Association's report, following the 1 April meeting, on the possibility of introducing a membership card system. As expected, the Association think the practical difficulties with the national scheme are overwhelming. They have also, I understand, copied their report to a number of others in the football world, including the Football Trust. You will wish to say you intend to look at the Association's report very carefully.

You may be interested to know that Hartley Booth assesses that a civil claim for £5-10 million might be successfully mounted against Bradford City Football Club. This would break them.

Lillian
P.P. MARK ADDISON

14 May 1985

MR ADDISON

FOOTBALL TRUST

I received a telephone call from Messrs Faulkner and Endicott, of the Football Trust, today.

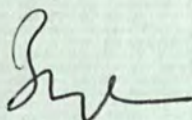
They said they recognised that a straight financial contribution by the Government for football ground safety and improvements might well be difficult on grounds of precedent.

They, however, saw an opportunity to make £21m available over two years by changing the pool betting duty arrangements.

The pools promoters had already agreed with the Football League that if the current level of duty (42.5%), worth £201m a year, were reduced to its pre-1982 level of 40%, two-fifths of the £10.5m this would release in a season would be devoted to ground safety improvements administered by the Football Trust.

In the new climate created by the Bradford fire, the promoters would probably be prepared to make the whole of the £10.5m available for two seasons, reverting to two-fifths later on the assumption that duty would remain at 40%.

But, if this means of pumping money into ground improvements were taken, the pools promoters would need legal protection in the Finance Bill from further taxation of the £10.5m. This was because the £10.5m might otherwise rank as a gift, subject to capital transfer tax or expenses which would not be offset by tax.



BERNARD INGHAM
14 May 1985

Football Grounds

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Leon Brittan): With permission Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement. The entire nation has been horrified and appalled at the terrible tragedy at Bradford City football ground on Saturday. I know that the whole House will wish to join together in expressing our deepest sympathy for the families and friends of the dead and of the many who were injured, some of whom remain critically ill.

The fire started just before half-time, at about 3.35 pm, under the floor at one end of the main stand. The stand was an old one made of metal and timber with a bitumen and felt roof, and the fire spread extremely rapidly. There were about 3,000 people in the stand. The majority managed to move down onto the pitch, but a number tried to escape through the exits at the rear and found themselves trapped in a narrow alley between the back of the stand and the wall of the ground. In accordance with long-established practice at sports grounds, the gates were locked to prevent unauthorised spectators gaining admission. It was there that many people died.

The chief constable of West Yorkshire informed me this morning that 51 people died at the ground. Two more have since died in hospital. A further four people are reported missing and remain unaccounted for. The bodies of most of those who died at the ground have not yet been identified. In addition, over 200 people were injured, of whom 60 are still in hospital. Twenty two policemen were injured, of whom two are in hospital, and three firemen were injured, none of whom is still in hospital.

The cause of the fire has not yet been ascertained, but a team of detectives from the West Yorkshire police, assisted by forensic scientists are members of the West Yorkshire fire brigade, began sifting through the debris as soon as it had been made safe to do so. The police have asked for witnesses to come forward, who might be able to give evidence about the possible cause of the fire, and it is essential that members of the public should give every assistance.

I should like to pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of the police and fire services. No one who has seen the television film of the events can doubt that as much as could be done was done to get people out of the stand, and then to deal with the aftermath of the fire. I should also like to express the warmest appreciation for the dedication and skill of the medical and pathological teams, the ambulance service and all the hospital and voluntary agencies who have since been working day and night, treating the injured and consoling the bereaved.

Further, the House will be aware that at Birmingham on the same day many people were injured and subsequently one spectator died as a result of a serious crowd disorder at the match between Birmingham City and Leeds United, arising from violence by groups of fans from both clubs. There were repeated invasions of the pitch, missiles were thrown, and the police were attacked. In all, there were 125 arrests, 96 police officers required medical treatment, of whom two are still in hospital, and over 80 spectators were injured. Some of the injuries were caused when a wall collapsed following a surge in the crowd, and a boy of 15 subsequently died of the injuries he received. All 125 of those arrested have now been

charged with a variety of criminal offences. That is a further example of disgraceful football violence, which illustrates the link between the problem of crowd safety and the problem of crowd control. With regard to this incident, inquiries are also being made by the Football Association, and these must proceed.

Investigations at Bradford are continuing and inquests will be conducted both there and at Birmingham. I shall expect to receive further reports in due course giving the conclusions of the police, forensic and fire brigade inquiries in Bradford and of the police inquiries in Birmingham. But over and above these investigations and hearings, the magnitude of the events demands that urgent steps should immediately be taken to examine what can be done to prevent such incidents. With my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland I have, therefore, asked Mr. Justice Popplewell to chair an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

"To inquire, with particular reference to the events at Bradford City and Birmingham football grounds on 11 May, into the operation of the *Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975*; and to recommend what if any further steps should be taken, including any that may be necessary under additional powers, to improve both crowd safety and crowd control at sports grounds."

I understand that Mr. Justice Popplewell will visit Bradford tomorrow.

The inquiry's fundamental task will be to ensure that the demands of safety, on the one hand, and control, on the other, are not only each satisfied in themselves but satisfied compatibly with each other. A subsidiary but important task will be for the inquiry to review what is known as the "Green Guide"—the "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds"—which provides guidelines for local authorities as to the conditions that they should require of clubs that seek certification under the 1975 Act. I shall ask that the inquiry should proceed with all possible speed, taking account of and supplementing, as necessary, the findings of the current police, forensic service and fire brigade investigations. I shall arrange for the chairman to be assisted by appropriately qualified assessors—for example, from the police and fire services—and to have available such technical advice and support as he requires. He will, of course, be able to make any further factual inquiries into what happened that he thinks necessary. If the chairman thinks it necessary or desirable, I and my right hon. Friend will welcome any interim report or recommendations he wishes to submit.

In addition, and in parallel with the work of the inquiry, I have decided to designate all grounds in the Third and Fourth Divisions of the Football League so that they become subject to the system of safety certification under the *Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975*. The effect will be to require such clubs to apply for certificates from the relevant local authority specifying in considerable detail what physical conditions and management practices—including as to fire precautions—must be followed. The Government announced only on 1 April that we should be extending designation to third and fourth division grounds, but starting with those with a record of club violence. It is plain, however, that the time for selective action has passed, and I shall accordingly be discussing with the football authorities immediately how universal designation may be implemented as soon as possible. It will, of course, be for the inquiry to recommend any changes in the present certification procedures or any other steps that should be taken to improve crowd safety and control. But I can see no reason why designating the third and fourth

Mr. Raison: The hon. Gentleman is wrong about that. Firms which invest will be looking for profits, but their activities will undoubtedly create employment in the countries where the investment is taking place and help to increase prosperity. This is an important part of our programme.

Sir John Page: Does my right hon. Friend agree that private investment often sets a standard in developing countries which helps to drag local investment up to higher standards than it has been able to achieve before?

Mr. Raison: I agree with my hon. Friend. Britain has exceeded consistently the United Nations 1 per cent. target for the total of official and private flows of aid to developing countries. In 1983 we achieved 1.25 per cent.

Chile

38. **Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what emergency or other aid his Department is giving in response to the recent earthquake in Chile.

Mr. Raison: Her Majesty's Government have provided £250,000 in emergency assistance since the earthquake in March. That is in addition to our share of the recent contribution by the European Community from its emergency aid budget.

Mr. Holland: The Minister will be aware that £250,000 is a very small sum in relation to the needs. The House will certainly want to monitor this in future, granted that on a previous occasion a field hospital, apparently delivered to the Pinochet Government, was not deployed in a disaster area. Will the Minister also take this opportunity to assure the House that on economic, social and technical grounds, he will now be supporting a major aid programme to Nicaragua and not supporting his right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary in a political blockade of that country, as reported in *The Observer* yesterday by Hugh O'Shaughnessy?

Mr. Speaker: The question is directed to Chile.

Mr. Raison: If the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) wants to ask questions about Nicaragua, perhaps he will table questions about Nicaragua. As you have said, Mr. Speaker, the question is about Chile.

The aid that we have provided is useful. We shall be concerned to ensure that it is properly used. There is no reason to believe that it will not.

Ethiopia and Sudan

39. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give his most up-to-date estimate of aggregate food aid needed for Ethiopia and Sudan for 1985.

Mr. Raison: The best estimates available are that Ethiopia will require 1.5 million tonnes and Sudan 1.4 million tonnes of cereals food aid during 1985. Most of this has been delivered or pledged. In response to requests by various British voluntary agencies, I am pleased to announce further assistance totalling over £2 million for victims of the famine in Ethiopia and the Sudan: about half to each. It covers a variety of purposes, including the transport of food, supplementary food, seeds and tools.

Mr. Lloyd: I welcome the Minister's response, but will he confirm that reports are coming out of Ethiopia that there are still massive difficulties in distributing food aid? Will he also confirm that the British Government still regard the provision of lorries as development assistance and therefore will not provide that help, which means that the aid that is given is not as effective as it should be in helping those who are in desperate need?

Mr. Raison: That is a misapprehension. There are great difficulties in operating emergency relief in Ethiopia. Some difficulties arise partly from the civil war; and others are attributable to many other factors. We are doing our best and contributing a great deal. There will be difficulties that will continue into the long term. The most fruitful approach for us will be through the European Community and the World Bank. I am sure that something useful can be worked out.

Mr. MacLennan: Does the Minister recognise that the railway in southern Sudan and—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has tabled question No. 40, which seems to be directed to the same subject.

Mr. MacLennan: I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I was on the same issue.

Does the Minister accept that there is an urgent need for spare parts and considerable capital investment for the railway in southern Sudan and for transport by road across rough territory in Ethiopia? Are the Government prepared to listen to representations from the aid agencies and to make money available to help them?

Mr. Raison: I told the House that additional money has been made available for exactly those purposes. We have consistently tried to help with supplies, spares, and so on, in the transport sector, and we shall continue to do so. For the railway system, especially in western Sudan, we have provided an expert, who has put forward ideas about how to improve the flow of food to the west of the country.

division clubs or any of the other steps announced on 1 April should wait on its conclusions. It is clearly important that the public should be given all the protection that the existing law allows as quickly as possible, and that any measures to enhance safety and security that can be introduced speedily as a result of the work that has currently been proceeding should be implemented at the earliest possible date.

To ensure that the measures I have announced of a swift inquiry and a new programme of designation do not leave gaps meanwhile in public protection, I am asking chief fire officers immediately to visit uncertificated sports stadia in their areas to advise management on what steps they should take to secure proper standards of crowd safety in their circumstances. They will no doubt wish to discuss, among other matters, the opening and locking of gates at sports grounds. While I imagine such visits will be the more comprehensive if chief fire officers are accompanied by other members of the local authority safety teams, this work will brook no delay and, for that reason, I consider the duty to fall best initially on chief fire officers.

I must stress that the measures announced today are additional to those announced on 1 April after the meeting at 10 Downing street with the football authorities. That programme of measures agreed to combat football hooliganism goes ahead with renewed urgency.

The events at Bradford and Birmingham were in their different ways both tragic and sickening. Nothing will wipe away the memory of that terrible afternoon. But our task now must be to take urgent steps to minimise the chances of recurrence. The measures I have announced today are designed to that end. I will report to the House in due course on their progress and outcome.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): May I first, on behalf of Her Majesty's Opposition, offer our profound and heartfelt sympathy to those who were bereaved and fearfully injured in last Saturday's horrifying disaster? It is especially poignant that hundreds of people setting out to enjoy a pleasant spring day, which was, for Bradford City's fans, supposed to be one of celebration as well, should have seen that day end in torment and agony, or not seen that day end at all.

We send our sympathy also to the citizens of Bradford and Lincoln, who have been stricken by these appalling events. I also want to pay tribute to the emergency services—to the fire brigade, the medical staff, hospital workers and the police—and also to the fans and ground staff who sought to help, for their heroism and dedication in this emergency.

The Opposition believe that the Government have made a serious mistake in linking in one statement and in one inquiry the Bradford fire with the violence at Birmingham. The nature of those two events is different, even though some matters are relevant to both. To begin with, it is unfitting that questions on the disaster and on an outbreak of mob violence should be mingled. It creates the most difficult task for you, Mr. Speaker. I shall therefore confine my intervention to the Bradford fire and leave questioning about the Birmingham episode to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell).

With regard to Bradford, I therefore ask the Government to open forthwith a fund for the relief of the victims and their families. Some families may have been left without a breadwinner, and although the loss of a

loved one can never be compensated for financially, it is right that financial restitution should be made. In the case of those injured, the nature of their injuries may mean years of medical treatment and loss of earning power or educational opportunities. Proper and appropriate compensation should be made available for that.

Further, will the Government be ready to consider the possibility of making legal aid available to those who wish to consider legal action under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957? Is the club's insurance against public liability adequate to meet claims that will surely be made? The Opposition believe that the Government should have ordered a separate public inquiry, presided over by a judge, into the circumstances of the Bradford fire.

There are many questions to be answered, including the discrepant statements about whether Bradford City club had been warned about the need to improve its safety precautions some months ago. The leader of West Yorkshire county council has now published a letter which strongly indicates that such a warning was given. We need to know what the fire precautions were and why massive amounts of combustible litter had been allowed to accumulate under the wooden stand for a considerable period of time. We need to get to the bottom of allegations that arson may have caused the fire. The bereaved and the injured have a right to know the full facts. We also believe that there should be a separate inquiry into safety at football grounds, and at all sports grounds and other places where large numbers of the public gather together.

That inquiry should be empowered to make recommendations. The matters that it should be empowered to consider should include whether the 10,000 lower capacity limit for designation should be reduced, and the use of the Secretary of State's activating powers under the Fire Precautions Act 1971. At present, no football grounds have been designated under the Act. The inquiry should consider meanwhile whether the 10 grounds with wooden stands should close those stands. Equally urgent is the necessity to consider the question of the perimeter fencing-off of spectators from pitches, as there is general agreement that if such fencing had been installed at Bradford the casualty toll would have been even more horrific.

Ought not the Football Association to suspend its order to Luton Town to install a perimeter fence? The subject of the control of egress from grounds must be considered urgently, in view of the disastrous effects of the closing of the exits at Bradford. The nature of the material used for seating as well as stands must be considered, in view of the effect of the plastic seating at Bradford on the spread of the fire.

The ownership of grounds should be considered to see whether burdens can be lifted from the less successful clubs. The funding of football must be examined. There is a glaring disparity between the Government's attitude towards racing compared with football. It is essential both for the Government and for all commercial interests which benefit from their relationship with football to consider their financial obligations to a sport from which they obtain so much revenue and profit but provide so little in the way of return. The nature of these issues is such that an urgent interim report is essential well before the opening of the new football season, so that all possible advance precautionary action can be taken.

I did not think for one moment that I should be coming to the House this afternoon to ask controversial questions.

[Mr. Gerald Kaufman]

The reaction of my right hon. Friends and myself is one of astonishment and disbelief that the Government should join these two issues and treat this tragedy in this way. The Government's response to this disaster in setting up this joint inquiry is insensitive and in the worst possible taste. It will be deeply offensive to the bereaved, to the victims, to the stricken cities and to the nation. Let this be clear. The nation has reacted to this terrible disaster with grief. If negligence or complacency allow such a catastrophe to be repeated, the reaction will not be grief. It will be anger.

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) for his expression of regard for the work done by the emergency services, but I think that some of his subsequent remarks do not respond to the mood of the nation or of the House.

As for the right hon. Gentleman's main complaint—that there is to be a single inquiry—some of the points which he suggested should be considered by the inquiry themselves make it clear that safety and control are very much related and that it would be wholly artificial to divorce the two. One is in no sense equating the two incidents, one in which a life was lost and the other in which so many lives were lost, if one says that the inquiry should properly be able to consider both control and safety. That is what the inquiry will be able to do.

The point is best illustrated by one of the matters raised by the right hon. Gentleman, namely, the perimeter fencing. The suggestion has been made, in effect, that perimeter fencing is inconsistent with safety, or goes against safety. Anybody who looks at the green guide will readily see that the designation requirements have to be looked at as a whole. They include the ability to evacuate grounds and stands speedily. Perimeter fencing which did not meet the requirements would not be approved under the safety certificate. There is, therefore, a relationship between safety and control.

I take note of the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion about opening a fund for the relief of the victims. I shall want to consider it in the light of the situation as it develops concerning the needs of everybody who has been affected and the resources available to provide for those needs.

Legal aid will be available in the normal course of events for any eligible person who is able to make out a case for such aid to the legal aid committee.

There is still some uncertainty about the insurance question, and that is being looked into.

With regard to warnings given to the club concerned, I have in my possession the text of letters emanating in 1984 and on 30 April 1985 on that matter. I understand that there may be some dispute whether those letters were received, but there can be little doubt that they were sent.

I can give the right hon. Gentleman some reassurance on the many matters that he mentioned, because when one takes account of some of the forensic points there is not really all that much between us. Almost all of those points fall well within the ambit of Mr. Justice Popplewell's inquiry, which will be extremely comprehensive, as I think the right hon. Gentleman will agree, on mature reflection, when he studies further its terms of reference. In particular, the right hon. Gentleman referred to an interim report, and the House will recall that I specifically

said that it would be open to Mr. Justice Popplewell to make such a report if he thought that it was necessary or appropriate to do so.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): May I, together with my right hon. and hon. Friends, join the Home Secretary in expressing our deep sadness and sympathy for those who have suffered as a result of the tragedy on Saturday afternoon at Bradford? It is a terrible sadness that some of those who went to the Valley Parade to celebrate the third division championship should not have returned home at all or should have to wait many months before returning home severely maimed.

May I also join the Home Secretary in expressing our gratitude to the emergency services, the ground staff and the many courageous football fans who joined others in trying to save people in dangerous circumstances?

May I impress upon the Home Secretary the importance of urgently solving the problem of safety, which it is hoped may be solved fairly quickly, where as problems of control have occupied us for many years now and may not be so easy to solve?

Will the Home Secretary give the House his assurance that his welcome decision to bring third and fourth division grounds within the provisions of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act will be extended to other comparable stadia and, above all, that the Government will provide the money to enable those clubs and sporting facilities which cannot afford to bring their facilities up to standard to do so? In doing that, will the Home Secretary bear in mind that Bradford City was a club which gave cheap entry to the unemployed and the disadvantaged?

Mr. Speaker: Briefly.

Mr. Carlile: Finally, will the Home Secretary please ensure that the insurance companies will not be allowed to fall back on the position which they expressed this morning, that no compensation will be paid unless negligence is proved? Will he ensure that in this case at least the principle of no fault liability is laid down for those who have suffered?

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to the hon. and learned Gentleman for his expressions of appreciation to those involved in dealing with these tragic events. He mentioned some particular groups who are worthy of commendation but whom I was unable to mention specifically in my statement.

We shall want to consider the extension of designation beyond the third and fourth division football grounds in the light of the inquiry as it develops.

The House will be familiar with the existence of the Football Grounds Improvement Trust and the Football Trust, which receive some of the "spot the ball" revenue from the Pool Promoters Association. Quite a lot of that money is used to improve football clubs' facilities. For example, we are talking of expenditure at the rate of £7 million a year.

As it happens, before these tragic events occurred a meeting was arranged for this coming Wednesday between my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and Lord Aberdare, the chairman of the Football Trust. In discussions on designation I shall be involved with my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for sport and the Football Trust to see what the financial situation is. I know that my hon. Friend is also considering whether assistance can be given under the urban programme.

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): May I associate my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson) and myself with the expressions of condolence and sympathy of the Home Secretary at this appalling tragedy? On the face of it, it appears to raise again matters such as escape doors, gates and other forms of egress from sports grounds. Will the Home Secretary seek to introduce legislation, or amend existing legislation, so that where such exits exist, whatever the difficulties caused to the corporation or sports ground owning them, they should be available for egress in the event of a disaster?

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for what he has said. In response to his last and very substantial point, the House might be interested to know that paragraph 6.14.6 of the green guide clearly states:

"All exit gates should be manned at all times while the ground is used by the public so that they can be opened immediately in an emergency."

That condition would normally be applied where there has been designation.

Mr. Robert Maclellan (Caithness and Sutherland): Although it is obviously premature to consider what funding will be necessary to bring safety standards up to an acceptable level, will the Government undertake to ensure that money does not stand in the way of seeing that those standards are reached?

Mr. Brittan: I have already said that the means by which the requirements that will flow from designation are implemented will be discussed with the football authorities.

Mr. Geoff Lawler (Bradford, North): May I offer my sincere thanks to all of those hon. Members who have expressed their sympathy following the tragic event on Saturday? I know that my constituents and the people of Bradford will greatly appreciate those expressions of sympathy and will derive some comfort from them. May I thank, in particular, the Minister of State, Home Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Mr. Shaw) and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Macfarlane) for coming up to Valley Parade so promptly to see the situation at first hand? That prompt reaction was again an expression of the Government's concern, and was much appreciated.

I welcome the appreciation that has been expressed by my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary and other hon. Members for the work of the emergency services. I am sure that they would join with me in paying tribute not only to the emergency services but to members of the Salvation Army, who were there throughout Saturday night, doling out tea and refreshments to those working late at the ground, to the St. John's ambulance men and to the anonymous heroes — many of them young people — who stayed behind at the wall and helped to pull the less able and less agile over it, at great risk of personal injury to themselves. Many of those helpers, indeed, ended up in hospital or suffered from burns.

I am sure that hon. Members will also want to pay tribute to the local community. People opened their doors and provided tea and comfort to the survivors. It is interesting to note that members of that community are of varied origin and that at a time when attention is very much

focused on apparent divisions within it, real community spirit shone in a crisis, showing just how shallow those divisions really are.

I welcome the announcement of an inquiry, and the people of Bradford will also welcome it. If public confidence is to be restored and people are to feel safe at football matches, urgent action must follow upon the report of that inquiry, before the start of the new season. I hope that the Government and the football industry, through the Football Trust, will be prepared to respond to the financial implications of that report.

Obviously, there is great public concern about what would have happened if there had been a fence instead of a low wall along the front. I think that the view of Bradford supporters is that it is all very well hemming in a minority of hooligans, but that at the same time a potential death trap might be created for thousands of decent supporters.

I hope that all the lessons that can be drawn from this incident and learnt and that there does not have to be another disaster for more mistakes to be discovered. I apologise for delaying the House, but may I ask the Government to make money available in the form of an urgent cash injection, through the urban programme, the Sports Council or the Football Trust, so that a stand can be erected as quickly as possible at Bradford City's ground to match the determination and resolve of the people of Bradford to overcome the tragedy?

Thousands of Bradford citizens will want to attend the first home match of the season as their way of paying their respects to the loyal supporters who died on Saturday. To enable them to do so, and to reflect that spirit and resolve, we must see a real and tangible metal phoenix rise out of the terrible ashes that currently lie at Valley Parade.

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Lawler) for his expressions of gratitude to and appreciation of those involved in dealing with this tragic event. My hon. Friend mentioned a number of other people in addition to those already mentioned in the House. I fully endorse what he said about them. I should like to take the opportunity to pay a tribute to my hon. Friend for the way in which he assisted over a long period in Bradford. It is an exemplary manifestation of the local leadership which an hon. Member can give on such an occasion.

My hon. Friend expressed anxiety about proposals for perimeter fences. I can assure him, as I did the right hon. Member for Gorton, that there is no question of simply putting up a fence which would create a trap. The arrangements for a ground as a whole will have to be considered, taking into account the nature of the ground, the means of getting out of the stands, the gaps in any fence and the manning of exits. Unless those professionally involved take the view that a perimeter fence adds to safety and security, it will not be approved. Safety and security are related. It is unrealistic to refuse to recognise that important fact.

My hon. Friend asked for assistance to put the Bradford club back on its feet. My hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for sport is on the Front Bench today and will appreciate the sincere and determined desire in Bradford to revive football there, with all that that means.

Mr. Thomas Torney (Bradford, South): I associate myself with the expressions of sympathy for all the people in Bradford who have lost loved and dear ones and for

[*Mr. Thomas Torney*]

those who are suffering in hospital. I associate myself and the people of Bradford with the tributes to the emergency services—to the courage of the police, the fire service and the ambulance personnel, who rescued many people, often at great danger to themselves. I also praise the dedication of the hospital staffs who tended, and are still tending, the injured. The duty of the Government and the House is to the 52 or 53 people who died and to ensure that nothing like this happens again anywhere in the United Kingdom.

I should have preferred a public inquiry, as would the people of Bradford. I hope that there will be a public inquiry, because confidence must be restored. Whatever conclusions the inquiry arrives at for improving safety precautions at football grounds throughout the United Kingdom, I hope that they will be speedily enforced by the Government. Enforcement requires money. The improvements that are necessary in Bradford and elsewhere will cost more money than can be provided by some trust or other. The Prime Minister is in her place. I beg her and the Government to ensure that the Chancellor provides money to implement the necessary safety measures.

May I suggest to the Chancellor some immediate actions which could be taken? Surely a law can be passed, or instructions given, that exit doors are not to be locked. Perhaps some paint-like material can be applied to wooden stands at other grounds which will make the outbreak of fire less likely. Surely we can order the use of sprinkler systems. Perhaps if there had been such a system in Bradford the fire would not have been so bad, because the system operates automatically with heat.

We owe it to those involved in the disaster to find the money. There must be no excuses. The money must be found to make football grounds throughout the United Kingdom safe for our people.

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his expressions of sympathy and for his appreciation of those involved in dealing with what happened at Bradford.

Towards the end of my statement I said that I was asking chief fire officers immediately to visit sports stadia which are uncertificated to advise on what should be done right away. I added:

"They will no doubt wish to discuss among other matters the opening and locking of gates".

The hon. Gentleman's suggestion about exits is well taken. I am not sure of the validity of what he said about sprinkler systems, but that can be examined on a professional basis.

The inquiry will be comprehensive, and it will be able to supplement, in any way thought appropriate by Mr. Justice Popplewell, the findings of the police and the inquest, which are the main means of investigation, at least in the first instance. Mr. Justice Popplewell will be able to satisfy himself about what occurred and thereby be able to make appropriate recommendations.

I do not think that the House wishes to hear the trust spoken of disparagingly, because it has provided, and is providing, the substantial sum of £7 million a year. The hon. Gentleman asked what would be done to deal with the financial problems. The Prime Minister will be meeting representatives of the trust. When discussing the implications of designation with the football authorities I shall, of course, discuss that aspect.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): I associate myself and my constituents with all the expressions of sympathy to the relatives and friends of those who died and to those who were seriously injured at Bradford at the weekend. I also pay tribute to all the emergency services.

It is with regret that I have to say that there will be understandable reservations in Bradford about the form of the inquiry which the Home Secretary has announced. He said that the events at Bradford and at Birmingham were tragic and sickening, but different. Many people in Bradford will therefore think that the two incidents should be investigated separately. If the Home Secretary is not prepared to reconsider the form of the inquiry, will he give a clear assurance that it will sit in Bradford and take evidence in public, and that its full report will be published?

Is the Home Secretary satisfied that the terms of reference will enable the inquiry to look into all matters of concern associated with the tragedy? I was pleased to hear the right hon. and learned Gentleman's response to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). Will he give serious consideration to establishing a fund from which the relatives of those who died and those who were grievously injured may apply for the compensation and help which inevitably will be needed? Will the Home Secretary also urgently consider enabling Bradford City football club to make its ground secure and safe?

I was pleased at the Home Secretary's response to previous requests of that kind. We all recognise that if third and fourth division grounds are to be made safe—indeed, non-league and sporting club grounds also—the clubs will be in desperate need of financial help, because many of them are short of money. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman urge the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the betting levy tax and to remove VAT from repair work? That would be of some financial help to enable the desperately ill-financed clubs to ensure that their grounds are made safe quickly and effectively so that the tragic events in Bradford on Saturday occur nowhere else in this country, or, indeed in the world.

Mr. Brittan: I shall, of course, draw the hon. Gentleman's tax suggestion to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will understand that I cannot say any more about that at this stage.

Obviously, the conduct of the inquiry is a matter for Mr. Justice Popplewell, but there is no question that its findings and report will not be published in full. I regard it as inconceivable that the inquiry will not sit in Bradford. I assure the hon. Gentleman—and I hope that this will be appreciated in Bradford—that there is no question of there being anything other than the fullest examination of what occurred at Bradford.

There is an important part to be played by the police, the fire service and the coroner. Mr. Justice Popplewell will then decide what further inquiries are necessary to supplement the information obtained in order to achieve a full picture of what happened. He will be fully encouraged to do whatever is necessary to secure that.

We are as determined as the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members to ensure that the lessons are learnt, but I repeat that I do not believe that we would be doing any service to the memory of those who died at Bradford if we failed to take comprehensive measures to ensure that those

who go to football grounds are as safe as possible from all hazards. To do that is not to show any disrespect for what occurred at Bradford or to equate it with anything else. It is to recognise the complex nature of the problem and the necessity of providing solutions, as far as we can, to every aspect.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle (Lincoln): On behalf of the people of Lincoln, I offer our deepest sympathy to all those who have suffered in this terrible tragedy. Lincoln has the greatest admiration for the heroic efforts of the emergency services in Bradford. In particular, the Lincoln City supporters wish to record their thanks to them.

Such a tragedy must never happen again. I welcome the inquiry, which above all, must concentrate on the paramount need for safety.

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and entirely endorse everything that he has said.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Does the Home Secretary accept that, as a Leeds Member of Parliament, I speak for all its citizens in saying that I am ashamed of the actions of the so-called Leeds fans at Birmingham on Saturday? I regret that their actions should in any way be mingled or bracketed with the bravery and tragedy at Bradford. The two things are separate.

The Government are to act now, quite properly, in the face of what we all saw on Saturday, which was dreadful. Will the Home Secretary explain where the division of responsibility lies between his Department and the Department of the Environment—which, I acknowledge, has an active Minister with responsibility for sport—in monitoring on a day-to-day basis the problems of safety, not only at soccer grounds, but at rugby league and, in some instances, rugby union grounds? We must not wait for another tragedy before we act. We all know of third and fourth division grounds and others where the stands could go up in flames in exactly the same way as the stand at Bradford.

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to say that there is no comparison between the behaviour at Bradford and that at Birmingham, and I am glad to have the opportunity to confirm that.

I have statutory responsibility for the Act, but its implementation on a general basis is considered closely in discussions not only with my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for Sport but with the football authorities. On the question of the detailed implementation on a place-by-place basis, the responsibility for issuing a certificate lies with the local authority, which takes heed of what the technical and professional experts say, whether they be fire officers or engineers. It also takes into account the green guide produced by the Home Office.

Mr. Mark Carlisle (Warrington, South): While welcoming my right hon. and learned Friend's decision to extend designation under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 to all third and fourth division grounds, may I ask whether he agrees with many hon. Members that that will be very expensive and will cost considerably more than the money currently available for ground improvements under the Football Trust?

Will the inquiry under Mr. Justice Popplewell also consider methods of financing and funding ground improvements, especially methods to obtain a greater income from betting and football pools?

Mr. Brittan: I am not sure that the final matter raised by my right hon. and learned Friend comes within the terms of the inquiry, but it is obviously something that it will have to consider.

Mr. Bruce George (Walsall, South): In following hon. Members who represented constituents who died, we must be deeply conscious of the fact that, but for the grace of God, any one of us could be making a similar statement, because all our constituencies have sporting grounds with stands which are as inflammable as that which went up in flames on Saturday.

Does the Home Secretary have any idea of how many sporting grounds—whether football, rugby, tennis or anything else—have stands comparable to that at Bradford? Will he reiterate that other sports must take seriously the events of last Saturday?

What is there in the British national character which requires such a catastrophe to force us into waking up to a fact which should have been manifestly obvious to the House and the country before the events of Saturday?

Mr. Brittan: I take note of the hon. Gentleman's last point. I cannot give him the figure for which he asked, not only for football, but for other sports. It is something that will have to be considered. Of course, the legislation is not confined to football, so the inquiry will not be confined to football. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman has raised matters that fall to be considered.

Mr. Marcus Fox (Shipley): It is right to point out that it is not only the city of Bradford that has suffered grievously. Many people living on the borders of the city also suffered. Indeed, some of my constituents lost their lives or were injured.

We want from my right hon. and learned Friend a categorical assurance that we will do everything in our power to discover the cause of the fire. I have spoken to many of my constituents who were at Bradford, and they expressed deep anxiety that events occurred that should never have occurred, but today is not the occasion to pursue that.

It would be foolish in the extreme to close grounds on the basis of safety regulations, while allowing the violence and hooliganism that is rampant in the sport to continue. The two are closely associated. I welcome the inquiry, and I am sure that it will go into everything that it can consider.

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks, particularly his closing remarks. I am sure that he is right. I can give him the categorical assurance that he seeks. We shall certainly do everything that we can to discover the cause of what happened. It is in nobody's interests that anything other than that should happen.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich): I wish at the outset to declare my interest as a director of a fourth division football club.

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that the tragic and harrowing scenes that we saw on Saturday night must never recur in British professional soccer? Will he comment—I regret to have to make this point—on the stories appearing in at least two national newspapers today to the effect that this appalling tragedy was caused by the throwing of a smoke bomb at the football ground?

Will the Home Secretary accept from me that, regrettably, of all sports in Britain, for some reason professional football seems to attract that mindless

[*Mr. Peter Snape*]

minority who care little for the game and who, indeed, appear rarely to watch the game? What plans do the Government have to combat that endemic hooliganism and enable us in Parliament to do something about the civil liberties of millions of people who wish only to go about their business and not to be threatened and assaulted by people masquerading as football fans?

Is the Home Secretary aware, from the point of view of designating sports grounds in the third and fourth divisions, that no clubs in those divisions can at present afford the funds necessary to put their grounds in order under the well-merited and needed provisions of the Act? Is he further aware that unless Government money is forthcoming third and fourth division football clubs in Britain are doomed?

In view of the money that has been taken out of professional football by way of VAT, betting tax and pools levy, it is time for the Government—any Government—to do more to give football clubs some degree of assistance if what was once Britain's national game, a game which we were proud to give to the world, is not to disappear entirely.

Mr. Brittan: I note what the hon. Gentleman said at the end of his remarks, but I urge him to take account of the fact that 75 per cent. of the cost of meeting designation is currently provided, and that is a not inconsiderable amount. However, I have said that I have taken note of the financial points that have been made.

I greatly welcome what the hon. Gentleman said about the mindless minority, which underlined, as many in the House will agree, the inevitable relationship between safety and behaviour and crowd control. The two cannot be divorced.

In answering the hon. Gentleman's question about what is being done, I refer him to the answer that was given in the House on 4 April, when an outline was given of what was agreed between the football authorities and the Government at the Downing street meeting. I refer specifically to the fact that we shall be introducing legislation on the lines of the Scottish legislation in relation to alcohol; that the review of the public order Acts which I shall be giving to the House shortly will contain recommendations relevant to this area; and that I have made clear to magistrates our support for them in following the tough guidelines of the Court of Appeal on football violence. I shall not rehearse all the measures which are on the record, but at this stage remind the hon. Gentleman only of those.

To answer the hon. Gentleman's question about the throwing of a smoke bomb, I am, of course, conscious that that allegation has been made. I was in touch with the chief constable to get the latest picture just before making my statement today. The position is that he does not feel that he as yet knows the cause of the fire, in spite of the various allegations that have been made.

Mr. Gary Waller (Keighley): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that one of the first victims of this tragic event to be identified was one of my most noted constituents, Mr. Roy Mason, a historian who died of his burns despite the heroic efforts of police and bystanders to extinguish the flames that were engulfing him?

On many occasions when I have visited the ground, the narrow passageways at the back of the ground have caused me concern. I recognise, however, that it is easy to be wise after the event.

Does my right hon. and learned Friend appreciate that this is a personal tragedy for the chairman of Bradford City football club, Mr. Stafford Heginbotham, who has adopted a tough and imaginative approach to the problem of crowd violence to prevent it from coming to Bradford City as it has come to nearby Leeds United, and who has seen this event occur just as the club was reaching the very pinnacle of its success?

Mr. Brittan: I agree with everything that my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): Is the Secretary of State aware that many of those who were members of the committee which looked into the question of the safety of sports grounds 11 years ago knew that it was a question of cash versus safety, and that it is clear that cash won?

Why does the Department operate the Horserace Betting Levy Board, which channels an 8 per cent. tax from that sport back into improving safety standards at race tracks, whereas football, which pays 42 per cent. by way of tax, relies on a charitable trust? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman ask the Chancellor to allow football to be freed of that tax for a year so that the resultant £212 million may be ploughed back into football to prevent a recurrence of this tragedy? Why, if it is good enough for the sport of kings, is it not good enough for the sport of the working class?

Mr. Brittan: The Chancellor will, of course, have those remarks drawn to his attention, though the hon. Gentleman did not present the analogy completely fairly. Football betting, in the form of pools, and horserace betting are subject to tax. In addition, a levy is payable on betting which is used to finance matters relating to racing. There is no such levy in relation to football. However, in each case there is a means of financing improvements to football, in the one case by a statutory levy, and in the other by a voluntary trust. The question whether the funding is adequate and what should be done about it is a legitimate one, though I do not feel that the hon. Gentleman put the matter entirely fairly in his question.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): As the representative of the young man who tragically died in Birmingham, I welcome the joint nature of the inquiry. Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that in Northampton we have a wooden football stand and a wooden rugby football stand, and that one of the major stands at the county cricket ground is wooden? Should we not therefore look at the whole aspect of spectators and stands? I hope that the Government will take that on board and consider the financial implications involved.

Mr. Brittan: The question of the material of which stands are made will obviously be central to the inquiry.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): May I, on behalf of the thousands of loyal and sensible supporters of Birmingham City and Aston Villa, express the disgust of those supporters and fans at the hooligan behaviour at Birmingham City football ground on Saturday?

Although I do not like the form of the joint inquiry which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has announced, will he confirm that that inquiry will be free

to sit in Birmingham? Will he also consider giving councils power to close football and other sports grounds until such time as their safety standards are up to the necessary limit, in the way local councils can proceed against other businesses and take enforcement action, even if his agreeing to do so would mean delaying the start of the football season?

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his expression of disgust at the hooliganism at Birmingham. I share it. The inquiry will certainly be free to sit in Birmingham should it feel that that would be helpful and appropriate.

In answering his final question, I draw the attention of the House to the provisions of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Precautions Act 1971, both of which allow application to be made to the court in effect to restrict the use of premises should circumstances relating to safety make that desirable.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): The whole world of sport—the Central Council of Physical Recreation, the governing body, and everybody—mourns the events of the weekend. I welcome the measures that my right hon. and learned Friend has announced, particularly the designation of the third and fourth divisions. Will that include the Scottish first and second divisions, which are equally important?

Will my right hon. and learned Friend in response to what other hon. Members have said, consult the Chancellor about the enormous sums taken from sport by way of taxation to see whether further relief can be given so that the Football Ground Improvement Trust, which does an excellent job, can ensure greater safety at grounds before the beginning of next season, so that all sports fans in the United Kingdom can enjoy their sport in safety?

Mr. Brittan: I take note of the points that my hon. Friend has raised from his experience, especially in relation to Scotland. The operation of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act in Scotland was reviewed last year by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland in consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the association of Chief Police Officers (Scotland), the Scottish football authorities and other interested bodies. At that time, it was concluded that there was no need to extend designation beyond the premier division, but the position has been kept under review and my right hon. Friend hopes that all aspects of the effectiveness of the Act in Scotland, including future designation policy, will be considered carefully within the ambit of that arrangement.

Mr. Michael Meadowcroft (Leeds, West): Is not one of the fundamental problems the fact that measures designed to improve security within sports grounds are likely to run directly counter to measures to improve safety in getting out of grounds? Does the Home Secretary agree that as well as using all possible ingenuity in taking immediate practical measures we must bear in mind that these really just buy time and that much more energy must be devoted to discovering why lawlessness and anti-social behaviour are so rife in the 1980s? Does he agree that none of us should accept that this is some kind of inevitable, malign evolution and that deeper research is needed into the underlying causes?

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman is entirely right. The underlying factors must be much more profound. He is

equally right to imply, however, that the difficulty of identifying and dealing with those factors in terms of basic social trends is likely to be such that we should be failing in our duty if we did not take such immediate practical measures as can be identified.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the Bradford incident was a tragedy of Aberfan proportions and casts a blight on the entire nation? Does he also accept, however, that the death of one person in a sad, shameful and barbaric episode at Birmingham City is just as sad for the family concerned? Does he agree that those incidents may be linked by mindless acts of hooliganism of the kind that may have occurred at Bradford and certainly occurred at Birmingham City? Is not one of the most important questions to be investigated that of why a national game is becoming a national disgrace?

In this context, is there not a vital part to be played by the magistrates who, week after week, deal with hooligans who have done their worst but often impose very small fines on them? Has not the time come to ask magistrates and judges to look upon the hooligans as the criminals that they are? Is not part of the problem that of ensuring that people have the will and spirit to enforce the law as it already exists?

Mr. Brittan: We must certainly encourage magistrates to use their powers to the full, and I have done that. I am also in touch with the police with a view to giving priority to the bringing of charges which would enable the courts to impose the correct penalties. To be fair to the magistrates, however, difficulty in obtaining evidence is an important part of the problem.

As for a national game becoming a national disgrace, I yield to no one in my disgust of and abhorrence for those who make that seem to be so. Nevertheless, for the vast majority of people, both players and spectators, the game is still a perfectly decent and honourable pursuit.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): May I draw the Home Secretary's attention to early-day motion 461, which calls for a reduction in the pools betting tax? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that Mr. Jack Dunnett, president of the Football League and a former Member of Parliament, has calculated that a reduction of 0.5 per cent. would bring in £1 million? May I also associate myself with the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) as vice-chairman of Hartlepool United and point out that the chairman, Mr. John Smart, would very much like to replace the wooden stand? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware, however, that a reduction of a few percentage points in the betting levy would not compensate for the amount of work that needs to be done at football clubs? I welcome the inquiry at Bradford City, but does the Home Secretary agree that it is not inquiries but cash that is needed to improve the football grounds of this country?

Mr. Brittan: I thank the hon. Gentleman for drawing attention to the early-day motion, which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor will not have failed to notice.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): May I endorse the comments of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) about the Football Association's

[Mr. John Carlisle]

recommendation for a perimeter fence around the Luton football ground? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in the light of the recent trouble such a recommendation is nonsense, and will he ask the Football Association to withdraw its instruction?

Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there is some correlation between hooliganism and safety? Does he agree that, but for hooliganism, the doors would not have been locked, more fire extinguishers might have been available and there would be no need to fence pitches? Will he spare no effort in introducing measures to correct and deter the hooligans so that once again the game can be played and watched in peace?

Mr. Brittan: I agree with the latter part of my hon. Friend's question, but I shall not be asking the Football Association to withdraw its recommendation, because such recommendations are not absolute. The green guide makes it clear that the perimeter fence is desirable, but that it must be considered in the context of security and safety as a whole, and in the context of arrangements for exits from the ground and for getting through the fence in times of emergency.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The Home Secretary is right to emphasise, as he has done on previous occasions, the need to consider perimeter fences in the broader context of safety generally, but in seeking to extend crowd safety measures to third and fourth division grounds will he ensure that there is also proper examination of the first division grounds at Manchester and Liverpool, for example, where it takes a considerable time to clear the crowd at the end of the game in the normal way? Does he agree that in an emergency or in a disaster in which emergency services need to come in we must have a guarantee that that aspect has been adequately considered?

Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that, having put so much emphasis on control, there is now great concern about whether sufficient attention has been given to the crowd safety aspect?

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman also agree—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be brief.

Mr. Lloyd: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Finally, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that all these investigations will be irrelevant unless sufficient money can be put back into the game to ensure that the necessary improvements are carried out?

Mr. Brittan: On the new point made by the hon. Gentleman, I entirely agree to the extent that it would be thoroughly wrong if the anxiety naturally being expressed about third and fourth division grounds and other non-designated grounds were to detract from the effort to ensure that proper arrangements operate at designated grounds.

Mr. Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): Having had to deal with the no less terrible aftermath at Ibrox, may I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to take seriously the point made by the right hon. Member for Horley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) about problems of liaison between the Department of the Environment and the Home

Office and local authorities? Will he also take seriously the question of money and consider whether arrangements can be made analogous with those in the racing industry?

Finally, is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that a number of police officers plunged into the fire to pull out fans who in other circumstances would have been pelting them with rocks? Is he aware that the police have had more than enough casualties as a result of football games and that they look to his new arrangements for public order to give a chief officer the power to ban a match if he believes that it would constitute a threat to public order?

Mr. Brittan: My hon. Friend has considerable experience in this area, having had to deal with the aftermath of the Ibrox disaster, and I note his comments.

As for relations between the two Departments and the football authorities, I think that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, who has responsibility for sport, would agree, as would the football authorities, that we try to keep in close touch. As for the public order review, I shall be announcing to the House very shortly the conclusions that I have reached, which certainly include recommendations relevant to football safety and security.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): This has been the most tragic football season that I can remember in more than 30 years as a regular football supporter. I welcome the Home Secretary's statement about designating third and fourth division grounds. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that this will cost tens of millions of pounds and that, despite the grants available, it could force a number of professional football clubs out of business? Surely the right hon. and learned Gentleman has heard enough from the Opposition to realise that what is really needed is an inquiry into how to get more money into the game to carry out the necessary crowd and ground safety measures. Will the Home Secretary ask his hon. Friends to set up an inquiry into how to raise this additional finance? Will he investigate the possibility of soft loans or grants from the Government being made for ground improvements? Will he consider dropping VAT and police charges? These are all measures which could put money back into the game. That is sadly needed, because, in the end, money counts, not pious thoughts.

Mr. Brittan: I note the hon. Gentleman's suggestions. I am not disregarding them, but it is not just a question of money. The hon. Gentleman would be greatly mistaken if he denigrated or played down the valuable part that can be played in deciding exactly what is to be done. Certainly, money alone will not solve the hooliganism aspect.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Will my right hon. and learned Friend issue strict instructions to all football grounds, cinemas and all other places of entertainment that they should never again lock emergency exits? They should remind themselves that it does not matter if a few people come in without paying. What matters is that the majority of people who want to get out of the premises should be able to do so.

Mr. Brittan: The problem would not arise if the exits were manned. I note my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I speak as a life-long soccer supporter. I think that no hon. Member would cavil at the earnings of soccer players. Those who have followed the game for a number of years will note

that violence on and off the field began when big bonuses were given for winning. Would it not be right to examine this aspect in the inquiry? Is it not worth considering imposing a levy on transfer fees, because high transfer fees add to the financial tensions in the game? That measure would be helpful.

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for those further suggestions.

Mr. Denis Howell (Birmingham, Small Heath): It is understandable that most of the questions have been concerned with the great tragedy at Bradford, but it would be unworthy of the House if hon. Members did not spend a little time on the serious law breaking at St. Andrew's on Saturday, which I witnessed. On that occasion, 96 policemen were injured and at least 1,500 people were on the pitch making a deliberate assault on the peace of the realm and the good order of our society—a serious situation which one never thought one would see in British sport. I therefore ask the Home Secretary to consider some matters arising from that incident.

The police were grossly outnumbered by between 600 and 700 law breakers on each side. The police deserve the highest praise for keeping the opposing armies apart and for preventing a general conflagration. We must ensure that two sets of sportsmen are never allowed again to create a situation—

Mr. Brittan: They were not sportsmen.

Mr. Howell: So-called sportsmen. Two separate and repeated baton charges by the police were required at both ends of the ground simultaneously over a period of 35 minutes. That was the extent of the disorder that occurred in Birmingham on Saturday, which I had the misfortune to witness, along with many other decent people, who were horribly sickened by it all.

Will the Home Secretary consider the concerted action by some of these league troublemakers, which was well planned and known in advance? There was excellent co-operation between the Leeds and the West Midlands police forces, but that was not enough to deal with the problem. We must ensure that, in such circumstances, people bent on disorder are not allowed to travel this country to break the law. I hope that the inquiry will take account of that point.

My right hon. Friends and I are concerned about the fact that there is to be only one inquiry. The Home Secretary is wrong to limit the terms of reference to the Bradford and Birmingham occurrences. *[Interruption.]* The terms of reference of the inquiry refer to Bradford City and Birmingham City football grounds, unless the terms have been changed since I received a copy. During the past two months there have been similar incidents on the Notts County, Luton and Chelsea grounds. Will the inquiry take all of those disorders into account, as it should, although they are not within its terms or reference?

The right hon. and learned Gentleman's statement did not refer to the Prime Minister's ministerial committee. I hope that that committee has not been superseded. How does the Home Secretary see the relationship between the two inquiries?

In view of the serious issues of law and order and public safety, how long will it be before Mr. Justice Popplewell reports? This is of the greatest importance if Mr. Justice

Popplewell's recommendations, which are bound to be costly, are to be put into effect in time for the beginning of the next football season.

Like the Scarman inquiry, will the Popplewell inquiry have available to it specialist advisers to consider the questions that need to be examined including how advance information and intelligence are obtained, the use to which they are put, how these incidents are exploited and how they can be prevented. Most importantly, will Mr. Justice Popplewell examine the deeper social significance of an occasion when so many hundreds of people go to a game bent on trouble? Will he consider why these difficulties persist in arising in our society?

Will the Government again look at the Chester committee's report, which recommended the creation of a football levy board? This is essential. The Home Secretary has said that the trust provides 75 per cent. of the cost of designation, but that is inadequate in view of the cost of the major structural alterations that will be required.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman referred to perimeter fencing. There is a dilemma between ensuring that those whom one does not want to be on the pitch are kept off and allowing thousands of people to use the pitch in an emergency as the only reasonable point of evacuation. Some of the gates in some perimeter fences do not match the requirements. The right hon. and learned Gentleman probably realises that and will do something about it.

Finally—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Howell: These are very important matters of law and order. They are distinct from questions of safety, and they justify our view that there should have been two statements.

Finally, will the Home Secretary convey our concern to the football authorities? Will he ask them to consider whether, where necessary the kick-off for important matches should be in the morning, and whether clubs whose travelling supporters have bad records should have all-ticket away matches? Most importantly, will he ensure that the licences are withdrawn from those proprietors of minibuses and coaches carrying football supporters who are seen—I understand that this happened on Saturday—to stop at supermarkets and pubs to load up with drinks?

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. Gentleman will be aware of the announcement that has been made about the Government's notices of intentions.

I take note of what the right hon. Gentleman said about the Chester committee's recommendations.

The most significant points made by the right hon. Gentleman relates to the events at Birmingham. He was right to draw attention in a very vivid way, in his accurate account of events, to the magnitude and horror of what occurred there.

As for the right hon. Gentleman's comments on the announcement, if he has time to look more closely at my statement he will see that the terms of reference of the inquiry are wider than he perhaps realised. Although the inquiry is invited to consider matters with particular reference to the events at Bradford City and Birmingham, that is not all that it is entitled to do. It is invited to look at the matter very much more broadly.

[Mr. Brittan]

The right hon. Gentleman asked about the inquiry having technical assistance. At a later stage in my statement I said:

"I shall arrange for the chairman to be assisted by appropriately qualified assessors . . . and to have available such technical advice and support as he requires."

As for the relationship between this inquiry and the measures agreed between the football authorities and the Government at No. 10 Downing street, I stressed towards the conclusion of my statement that the measures announced were

"additional to those announced on 1 April after the meeting at No.10 Downing street with the football authorities" and that the programme of measures agreed there must go ahead with renewed urgency.

British Aerospace

4.51 pm

The Minister for Information Technology (Mr. Geoffrey Pattie): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the outcome of the joint offer of shares in British Aerospace by the Government and the company.

Approximately 264,000 applications were received from the general public, excluding institutional priority applications, for a total of approximately 790 million ordinary shares.

Preferential applications were received from shareholders for approximately 23 million shares and from employees for approximately 3 million shares. All such valid applications will be allocated in full.

Valid applications from the general public for up to 20,000 shares will be allocated a minimum of 100 shares and a maximum of 275 shares, depending on the number of shares applied for. No allocation will be made in respect of public applications for more than 20,000 shares. On this basis, allocations will be made to some 260,000 applicants for a total of some 40 million shares.

As announced on 1 May, approximately 80.8 million shares, 55 per cent. of the total offered shares, have been allocated to institutional priority applicants.

It is expected that dealings in renounceable letters of acceptance in respect of the offered shares will commence tomorrow.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): Why is the language of the Minister's statement so contorted and convoluted that it is not possible to discover from it the amount that was raised in the sale? Was not the amount £550 million, and did not 55 per cent. of that go to the preferential institutions, with apparently only 2 per cent. finding its way to the employees, despite the Government's often-professed intention that shares should go to employees?

Are the Government somehow ashamed to reveal the total amount raised in the sale because of the increasing public perception that this is an exercise in selling off the furniture to pay the rent—that the money goes into the maw of the Treasury and is squandered by the Government while the public lose the prospect of future profits from a shareholding?

Have not the Government yet realised that they have finally betrayed the promise which they gave the House of Commons during the passage of the legislation that they would retain 25 per cent. of the shareholding?

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Norman Tebbit): Not again.

Mr. Smith: The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry shakes his head and says, "Not again." It is not surprising that the House of Commons should remind Ministers about their breaches of promises to the House. We shall continue to remind the Government that they gave a solemn undertaking to retain 25 per cent. of the shareholding to preserve the British national interest and that they have evacuated and abandoned that commitment.

Mr. Pattie: On that last point, the right hon. and learned Gentleman asked a similar question on 1 May. The answer that he was given then, he will not be surprised to know, has not changed since. The undertaking given by the Government in 1981 was to safeguard the national

FOOTBALL TRUST AND FOOTBALL GROUNDS IMPROVEMENT TRUST

History

The Football Grounds Improvement Trust (FGIT) was formed by the Pool Promoters Association (PPA) (comprising Littlewood, Vernons and Zetter Pools) in 1975 to help fund work required to meet standards prescribed under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act. Grants are paid to clubs to meet required improvements at a rate of 75 per cent. FGIT was established with the direct support of the then Minister for Sport, the Rt Hon Denis Howell. Its funds are provided by the capitals PPA from the proceeds of their 'Spot the Ball' competition which is not subject to duty.

The Football Trust (FT) was established in 1979 and now receives the "Spot of Ball" revenue, passing 54 per cent to FGIT. The FT also funds community and anti-hooliganism schemes. The Chairman of the Football Trust is Lord Aberdare; and of FGIT, Mr Tom Wharton. The Prime Minister is to meet Lord Aberdare on Wednesday, 15 May to discuss FT support for the package of anti-hooliganism measures agreed with the football authorities on 1 April. The PPA's support for the FT&T-GIT funds at £7 million a year.

FGIT has contributed to the cost of all those designated clubs in meeting required standards and, as the call for support for this purpose has lessened, has moved on to help fund other non-statutory ground improvements. It would take a considerable time for the football authorities to assess the cost of applying the Safety of Sports Grounds Act to the Third and Fourth Divisions.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

- Q.1 Government financial support for clubs having to meet Safety of Sports Grounds Act requirements?
- A.1 Hope and expect that the Football Grounds Improvement Trust will continue to aid clubs' expenses in this respect.
- Q.2 Government should help: not enough to rely on FGIT and clubs who still have to meet 40 per cent?
- A.2 Will be discussing with all concerned the details of proposal to extend designation under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act, but it is clear that clubs, like other entertainment businesses, have a responsibility for the safety of their clients.
- Q.3 Over-reaction: Third and Fourth Division clubs don't have large enough gates to justify (or pay for) these measures? Bradford promoted anyway?
- A.3 Tragic events show need. Cup competitions and local derbies increase crowds for particular matches.
- Q.4 Government/Sports Council money for rebuilding stand?
- A.4 Too early to comment. Concern at the moment for those killed or injured and to learn lessons for the future.
- Q.5 Extension to other sports grounds; revision of green code, etc?

- A.5 Dependent on outcome of inquiry.
- Q6. Designation of 3rd and 4th Division Football Grounds:
How is policy to be implemented?
Where is funding to come from?
- A6 I will be discussing implementation urgently with the
Football authorities and, with my hon. Friend the
Minister of Sport, with the Football Trust and the
Football Grounds Improvement Trust.
- Q7. But isn't the Government going to provide any money?
- A7. We will obviously consider the position in the light
of our discussions.
- Q8. What about the perimeter fencing - is the Government still
pressing on with this, despite the Bradford incident?
- A8. The designation requirements include the ability to evacuate
grounds and stands speedily. Perimeter fencing which
did not meet these requirements would not be approved
under the safety certificate.

E.R.

WHAT ACTION COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMPEL IMPROVEMENTS?

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975

Section 10 provides for the licensing authority (County Council) to apply to the court for an order to prohibit or restrict the admission of spectators to the whole or any part of a sports ground if the court is satisfied that the risk to spectators is sufficient. Section 10 applies to all sports grounds which in the Act means any place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air and where accommodation has been provided for spectators.

Fire Precautions Act 1971

Section 10 of the Act provides that, if the fire authority are satisfied that the risk to persons in case of fire is so serious that, until steps have been taken to reduce the risk to a reasonable level, the use of the premises ought to be prohibited or restricted the authority can apply to a court for an order. This section not only applies to premises which are designated under the 1971 Act but also to premises which can be so designated and thus to sports grounds.

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The provisions of the Act and the general duties that the legislation imposes extend to the Bradford Football Club ground. However, HSE takes the view that, where other legislation is more directly applicable (eg the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975) this should generally be the basis for any action which is taken in relation to safety matters.

CONCLUSION

The Chief Fire Officer of West Yorkshire has confirmed that the fire authority did not regard Bradford City stadium as a serious fire risk to justify action under section 10 of the 1971 Act in view of the low attendances in recent months. It is assumed that the County Engineer reached a similar view with regard to the similar powers contained in the 1975 Act.

Background Note on the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975

How the Act works

The Home Secretary has power under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 to designate any sports stadium with spectator capacity of more than 10,000, as requiring a safety certificate under the Act.

The effect of designation is to require the club (as occupier of the ground) to obtain a safety certificate from the local authority; and the latter are required to impose a spectator ceiling, but also have discretion to impose such other conditions as may be necessary in the interests of spectator safety.

Home Office guidelines (published in 1976) not only cover such basic matters as gradients of gangways, crush barriers and crowd flow hazards, but also a range of recommendations more specifically related to crowd behaviour, such as pitch perimeter fences, segregation of supporters and all-ticket matches. There is no evidence that authorities do not follow these guidelines or that clubs do not comply with the conditions imposed.

Existing designation policy

All the grounds of clubs in the 1st and 2nd Division of the Football League have been designated; and a handful of so-called international grounds. The grounds of clubs promoted into the 2nd Division at the end of each season are designated each year. The grounds of relegated clubs remain designated, which means that nearly half the current 3rd Division grounds are in fact already designated.

It has always been the expectation that designation should eventually be extended to the 3rd and 4th Division clubs. The Wheatley Report envisaged this.

Position of Rugby grounds

The Wheatley Report also envisaged ultimate designation of 1st and 2nd Division Rugby League grounds, which were regarded as on a par with 3rd and 4th Division

Football League grounds.

When the question of extending designation of the 3rd and 4th Division Football grounds was raised with D of E in 1982, the Home Office (G3 Division) also approached the Rugby League and Rugby Union, warning them that designation might be extended to their grounds too, and seeking information about ground facilities and spectator attendance patterns. This proved rather difficult to get (though both the Rugby League and Rugby Union were extremely co-operative). But the final outcome (only recently assembled) indicated a clear parallel between 1st and 2nd Division Rugby League grounds and 3rd and 4th Division Football grounds, in terms of peak attendances, such as to suggest a prima facie case for pulling in the 1st and 2nd Division Rugby League grounds, if and when the 3rd and 4th Division grounds are designated.

There is however a special financial problem over designation of Rugby grounds, in that FGIT funds are not available to Rugby clubs.

This is a point that the Inquiry might look into: if any special funding arrangements are made for the 3rd and 4th Division clubs, it would be only equitable to ensure that they applied also to Rugby.

FOOTBALL

Football

Will the Government provide extra money for football safety?

Mon 2/4/85
Received
APL

General Line to Take

My RHF the Home Secretary and my RHF the Minister for Sport will be discussing the implementation of the measures announced yesterday with the Football Authorities and the Football Trust. The Government recognises, of course, the substantial cost of the designation of third and fourth division grounds, but before reaching any decisions on whether additional help is required we need to establish:

- i) the likely costs, and
- ii) the availability of finance through the Football Grounds Improvement Trust, which gives grants to clubs to meet required improvements at a rate of 75%. *and has already*

Present position

*given £20m for safety rather
of improvements.*

I remind the House that:

Football

- i) the pools promoters provide about £7 million a year to the Football Trust of which more than half goes to the Football Grounds Improvement Trust for ground improvements at football league clubs.

*of sports we
both compete*

- ii) That due to lack of applications for ground development projects, the Football Ground Improvement Trust accumulated £3.3 million in its bank balance ^{in 1984}. That money was distributed, on the initiative of the football league, as retrospective grants to those clubs which had already received grants from the Trust - that is mainly to first and second division clubs, *not third and fourth division clubs*

i) That football league clubs received £5½ million a year from Pools promoters. [2½ copy new figures]

iv) That football itself has a duty to its customers and that substantial sums are spent on transfer fees and wages. [42½]

Linking of Bradford and Birmingham

As my RHF the Home Secretary made clear, the 2 incidents were totally different in character. But there is no question that the issues of crowd safety and crowd control are linked. That was evident from every question asked by hon Members opposite.

Perimeter fencing

As my RHF the Home Secretary made clear yesterday, the requirements for designation under the 1975 Act include the ability to evacuate grounds and stands speedily. Perimeter fencing which did not meet these requirements would not be approved under the safety certificate.

Football hooliganism

Following my meeting with the Football Authorities on 1 April, the Government undertook to introduce a substantial package of new measures including control of the sale of alcohol at grounds. The Football Authorities are still considering a number of further steps and I hope will be responding shortly.

Relationship between Popplewell Inquiry and previous measures

The measures announced by my RHF yesterday and in measures taken following Mr Justice Popplewell's inquiry will be in addition to those already announced.

Immediate action before next football season

My RHF the Home Secretary announced yesterday that he was asking Chief Fire Officers to visit sports grounds in their areas to advise management on what steps they should take to secure proper standards of crowd safety in their particular circumstances.

Moby Rourke

BRIEFING FOR PRIME MINISTER

Football income from the Pools

The Football League clubs receive funds from the Pools in 2 ways:-

a) in payment for the use of League fixture lists. A recent agreement (applying for 9 years) gives the Football League 2½% of pools turnover, net of pool betting duty, for the weeks of the British season. Currently this provides income of £5.3m. 25% goes to the Scottish League; the remaining 75% (nearly £4m) is divided equally between the 92 Football League clubs;

b) via the Football Grounds Improvement Trust (FGIT), established in August 1975, and the Football Trust (since late 1979). These Trusts receive a percentage (originally 10%, now risen to 20%) of the turnover of the Spotting the Ball competition - currently, £7.1m a year. Total payments to date are £36.9m, divided as follows:-

- August 1975 - December 1979 - £8.3m (FGIT)
- 1979 - April 1985 - £28.59m (both Trusts).

Since the Football Trust was established, 60% of its income has gone to FGIT. Last year the proportion was reduced to 54%. Total spending on safety work is in excess of £20m.

Pools profits

In their last financial year the 3 Pools companies (Littlewoods, Vernons, Zettlers) declared profits of £15.5m. The figure for the British season of football was £12.1m. The PPA make a point of saying that their total payment to football, in copyright and for the Trusts, is about £11m - almost the same as their own profits.

FGIT payment to clubs this year

Late in 1984 there was controversy between the Football Grounds Improvement Trust and the PPA when the latter found that £4m had been accumulated in that Trust's bank account. This had been accumulated because of a slow take-up of grants for improvement and safety at grounds. Most of the safety work for designation (in Division 1 and 2 clubs) had of course been completed. There was much argument about the use of these funds. Ultimately, Mr Jack Dunnett, President of the Football League, persuaded the PPA and the FGIT Chairman, Mr Clifford Barclay, that there should be payments to clubs giving them, retrospectively, a higher rate of grant for safety and improvement work completed. As in most cases the work had been done and paid for, the money provided - a final total of £3.3m - merely assisted clubs' current cash flow. Attached is a list of clubs in England, Wales and Scotland who received these payments and the amounts involved.

We understand the PPA agreed this as a favour to Jack Dunnett, whom they wished to support as League President; he was under attack from some clubs for the nine year copyright deal he had agreed with the PPA, virtually single handed, in December 1984.

The FGIT Chairman, Mr Clifford Barclay, subsequently resigned.

Line to take

I applaud the generous support given to football by the Pools Promoters Association in their funding of the Football Trust and the Football Grounds Improvement Trust. Those two Trusts have done a marvellous job, giving the clubs substantial funds to help them improve their grounds and make them safe. We anticipate that similar help will now be given to the clubs in Division 3 and 4.

[It is a great pity that earlier this year some £3.3m accumulated by the Football Grounds Improvement Trust was paid out to clubs, at the instigation of the Football League, in retrospective extra grants for work already done. I am sure this money helped clubs with their cash flows in January and February but it would be very useful now for safety work that the tragic events at Bradford City have shown us all to be vital.]

David Teasdale

DOE.

212-7106

MR ALISON

file ✓

cc Mrs Ryder
Mr Flesher

The Prime Minister is meeting
Jim Lestor and members of the All-Party
Committee on Football Hooliganism at
4 pm on Thursday.

I have arranged for Neil Macfarlane
and Giles Shaw to attend as well. The
Home Office will be providing a briefing
note, in consultation with DOE, the night
before.

Mark Addison

13 May 1985

Football
Videance.

cf. Football file pl.
MEAT 14/15

TO BE CHECKED
AGAINST DELIVERY

1500
13.5.85

HOME SECRETARY'S STATEMENT ON FOOTBALL GROUNDS: FIRE AND
DISTURBANCES

MEA

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

The entire nation has been horrified and appalled at the terrible tragedy at Bradford City football ground on Saturday. I know that the whole House will wish to join together in expressing our deepest sympathy for the families and friends of the dead and of the many who were injured, some of whom remain critically ill.

The fire started just before half-time, at about 3.35 p.m., under the floor at one end of the main stand.

The stand was an old one made of metal and timber with a bitumen and felt roof, and the fire spread extremely rapidly. There were about 3,000 people in the stand. The majority managed to move down onto the pitch; but a number tried to escape through the exits at the rear and found themselves trapped in a narrow alley between the back of the stand and the wall of the ground. In accordance with long established practice at sports grounds, the gates were locked to prevent unauthorised spectators gaining admission. It was here that many people died.

The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire has informed me this morning that he is satisfied that no more than 55 and no less than 51 persons died at the ground. Two others have died in hospital. The bodies of most of those who died at the ground have not yet been identified.

/In addition

In addition, over 200 people were injured, of whom 60 are still in hospital. 22 policemen were injured, of whom two are in hospital; and three firemen were injured, none of whom is still in hospital.

The cause of the fire has not yet been ascertained, but a team of detectives from the West Yorkshire police, assisted by forensic scientists and members of the West Yorkshire fire brigade, began sifting through the debris as soon as it had been made safe to do so. The police have asked for witnesses to come forward who might be able to give evidence about the possible cause of the fire, and it is essential that members of the public should give every assistance.

I should like to pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of the police and fire services. No-one who has seen the film of the events can doubt that as much as could be done was done to get people out of the stand, and then to deal with the aftermath of the fire. I would like also to express the warmest appreciation for the dedication and skill of the medical and pathological teams, the ambulance service and all the hospital and voluntary agencies who have since been working day and night, treating the injured and consoling the bereaved.

Further, the House will be aware that at Birmingham on the very same day many people were injured and subsequently one spectator died as a result of serious crowd disorder at the match between Birmingham City and Leeds United, arising from violence by groups of fans from both clubs. There were repeated invasions of the

pitch, missiles were thrown, and the police were attacked. In all there were 125 arrests, 96 police officers required medical treatment, of whom two are still in hospital, and over 80 spectators were injured. Some of the injuries were caused when a wall collapsed following a surge in the crowd, and it was a boy of 15 who subsequently died of the injuries he received.

This was a further example of disgraceful football violence, which illustrates the link between the problem of crowd safety and the problem of crowd control. With regard to this incident inquiries are of course also being made by the Football Association.

Investigations at Bradford are continuing and inquests will be conducted both there and at Birmingham. I shall expect to receive further reports in due course giving the conclusions of the police, forensic and fire brigade inquiries in Bradford and of the police inquiries in Birmingham. But over and above these particular investigations and hearings, the magnitude of these events demands that urgent steps should immediately be taken to examine what can be done to prevent such incidents. With my Rt Hon friend the Secretary of State for Scotland I have therefore asked Mr Justice Popplewell to chair an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

"To inquire, with particular reference to the events at Bradford City and Birmingham football grounds on 11 May, into the operation of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975; and to recommend what if any further steps should be taken, including any that may be necessary under additional powers, to improve both crowd safety and crowd control at sports grounds."

I understand that Mr Justice Popplewell will visit Bradford tomorrow.

The inquiry's fundamental task will be to ensure that the demands of safety, on the one hand, and control, on the other, are not only each satisfied in themselves but also satisfied compatibly with each other. A subsidiary but important task will be for the inquiry to review what is known as the "Green Code", that is the "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds", which provides guidelines for local authorities as to the conditions that they should require of clubs that seek certification under the 1975 Act. I shall ask that the inquiry should proceed with all possible speed, taking account of and supplementing, as necessary, the findings of the current police, forensic service and fire brigade investigations. I shall arrange for the Chairman to be assisted by appropriately qualified assessors - for example from the police and fire services - and to have available such technical advice and support as he requires. He will of course be able to make any further factual inquiries into what happened that he thinks necessary. If the Chairman thinks it necessary or desirable, I and my Rt Hon friend will welcome any interim report or recommendations he wishes to submit.

In addition, and in parallel with the work of the inquiry, I have decided to designate all grounds in the Third and Fourth Divisions of the Football League so that they become subject to the system of safety certification under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. The effect will be to require such clubs to apply for certificates

from the relevant local authority specifying in considerable detail what physical conditions and management practices - including as to fire precautions - must be followed. The Government announced only on 1 April that we should be extending designation to Third and Fourth Division grounds but starting with those with a record of club violence. It is plain, however, that the time for selective action has passed, and I shall accordingly be discussing with the football authorities immediately how universal designation may be implemented as soon as possible. It will, of course, be for the inquiry to recommend any changes in the present certification procedures or any other steps that should be taken to improve crowd safety and control. But I can see no reason why designating the Third and Fourth Division clubs or any of the other steps announced on 1 April should wait on their conclusions. It is clearly important that the public should be given all the protection that the existing law allows as quickly as possible, and that any measures to enhance safety and security that can be introduced speedily as a result of the work that has currently been proceeding should be implemented at the earliest possible date.

To ensure that the measures I have announced of a swift inquiry and a new programme of designation do not leave gaps meanwhile in public protection, I am asking chief fire officers immediately to visit uncertificated sports stadia in their areas to advise management on what steps they should take to secure proper standards of crowd safety in their particular circumstances. They will no

doubt wish to discuss amongst other matters the opening and locking of gates at sports grounds. Whilst I imagine such visits will be the more comprehensive if chief fire officers are accompanied by other members of the local authority safety teams, this work will brook no delay and, for that reason, I consider the duty to fall best initially on chief fire officers.

I must stress that the measures announced today are additional to those announced on 1 April after the meeting at 10 Downing Street with the football authorities. That programme of measures agreed to combat football hooliganism goes ahead with renewed urgency.

The events at Bradford and Birmingham were in their different ways both tragic and sickening. Nothing will wipe away the memory of that terrible afternoon. But our task now must be to take urgent steps to minimise the chances of recurrence. The measures I have announced today are designed to that end. I will report to the House in due course on their progress and outcome.