



Prime Minister:

You may like
to be aware of
the latest position

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28 July 1982

Dee Tom

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DISTURBANCES IN TOXTETH

We have received a report from the Merseyside police about disturbances in Toxteth last night, and the night before. Some mention of this has been made in the press, and you might like to know the facts.

2. The incidents began at mid-day on Monday 26 July when 2 police officers arrested 2 white youths on suspicion of the possession of a stolen property. The officers were attacked by 8 other youths and the 2 who had been arrested escaped. One of the officers was slightly injured.

3. There were problems overnight from 26-27 July taking most frequently the form of youths stealing cars and driving recklessly around the area. This attracted approving crowds of between 60-80 people, usually young, of both sexes and black and white, gathering on the streets. When the police sought to intervene their vehicles were stoned. In one incident, a stolen car was overturned and set alight. The trouble ceased by about 1 am on Tuesday 27 July. There were 2 arrests.

4. Incidents of the same sort were repeated last night, starting at about 9 pm when stones were thrown at police vehicles, in one instance, 2 officers were slightly injured. At 9.45 pm a stolen car was overturned and set on fire. A crowd of about 200 people gathered in Upper Parliament Street and erected barricades. The atmosphere was tense but police officers, deployed in small numbers although wearing protective clothing were able, with the assistance of community leaders, to persuade the crowd to disperse peacefully.

5. The police viewed these incidents seriously and are making every effort to defuse the tension. Today is particularly delicate and important, as the anniversary of the death of David Moore, who was killed on 28 July 1981 by a police vehicle. There is some suggestion that the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee proposes to hold a commemorative, wreath laying ceremony, to be filmed by Granada Television. It seems that the first plan was to lay a wreath this evening but that it may now take place, if it does at all, at mid-day, when the light would be better

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for the television cameras. This is illustrative of the intense media interest and activity in the area, which does not help the police in their efforts to produce calm.

6. The Police Authority discussed the situation yesterday and were, apparently, content with the police account of the incidents, as being unrelated and sporadic, and with the police action.

7. We are keeping in close touch with the Merseyside police. They believe that they are fully prepared to deal with any outbreak of serious public disorder which may occur, but they wish as far as possible to avoid a major confrontation and are making every effort in that respect.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Edmonds (Department of the Environment).

C J Walters
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C J WALTERS

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