

PRIME MINISTER

POPPLEWELL

As you know, the interim report of Mr. Justice Popplewell is to be published on Tuesday, and the Home Secretary's proposals for handling this are at Flag A. The report is at Flag B. You have already cast an eye over the key recommendations in Chapter 6 on membership cards.

Generally the report is a very helpful one. On Bradford, the clear conclusion is that, if the Green Code had applied, and been complied with, the fire would not have started, nor could it have had such dreadful consequences.

On Birmingham and hooliganism, Popplewell concludes:

- (i) Drink was a key contributing factor to the violence, (though alcohol was not in fact available at the ground).
- (ii) Football violence is getting worse.
- (iii) Violence is an endemic feature of our society; football is a magnet for it; unemployment is not a convincing explanation.
- (iv) Visiting supporters cause more trouble than home supporters.
- (v) Membership card schemes could offer a way of keeping out the troublemakers and/or visiting supporters altogether.
- (vi) Closed-circuit television coverage needs to be extended.

This of course is an interim report. Popplewell intends to mull over some of his provisional recommendations before they

go into the final report. A summary of the recommendations is in Chapter 7. Chapter 6 contains the key passages on hooliganism.

No doubt the Football Association and the Football League will deride Popplewell's conclusions on membership cards as unworkable, and as yet another contribution from somebody who doesn't understand the problem, etc. This line is beginning to look thin. Popplewell could not, in fact, have come at a better time, now that the League has reluctantly offered to set up a working party to look at membership cards.

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