

“ P R E S S R E L E A S E ”

10 December 1996

## ALDERDICE CRITICISES PAISLEY ON BLOCKADE

Alliance Leader, Lord Alderdice, has launched a stinging attack on DUP Leader, Dr Ian Paisley, over the role of his party in the picketing of the Church of Our Lady in Harryville, Ballymena.

Lord Alderdice said:

“I note that at the weekend Dr. Paisley, as local MP condemned the scenes of violence and intimidation which Harryville has experienced for the past 13 weeks. This is typical. Repeatedly over the years he has stirred the pot, and then sought to distance himself from the results of his actions.

“It was he who whipped up anti-Catholic feelings. It was he and his followers who picketed Churches over the years especially the churches of those who were prepared to engage in discussion between Protestants and Catholics. Representatives of his party, including his son Ian, were right at the heart of the Ballymena blockade at the start, with undoubted Paisley voters and supporters. Then, having erecting the metaphorical bonfire and passed around the boxes of matches, he declares himself unhappy about the inferno that results.

“It is a long time since young men in prison declared that their attitudes and views had been moulded by Dr Paisley’s speeches, only to find that he washed his hands of them when things turned sour.

“It is time that Dr Paisley took some responsibility for the flames of sectarian bigotry which he has spent his political life fanning, instead of indulging in the Pontius Pilate exercise, that we have seen again this week.”