

Original G/R
CF to note

cc: NIO
Office of the Minister
of Sport
FCO
Sport
Crest



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 June 1980

Dear Mr. Paisley,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April enclosing one from Mr. George Montgomery of 66 Orkney Street, Belfast about competitors from Northern Ireland attending the Olympic Games in Moscow.

No Government funds are being used to send competitors to the Olympic Games in the Soviet Union and there is no question of the Sports Council for Northern Ireland operating a scheme to assist competitors in this way. The grant schemes operated by the Council are designed to help governing bodies in Northern Ireland develop sports there. Although high level training is eligible for assistance under these schemes this is principally intended to help those with talents to achieve their full potential and is part of a broadly based coaching scheme. As in Great Britain, it is not feasible to prevent would-be competitors taking advantage of these schemes, but their purpose is by no means intended to assist them to participate in the Games.

I am aware that there are Ulster branches of Irish sporting bodies which in some sports such as rowing, boxing and hockey have Northern Ireland team members and compete at international level. Such people are of course dealt with by the Irish Sports Council based in Dublin. I am therefore glad that the attitude of the Government of the Republic of Ireland is also to recommend competitors to stay away from the Olympics in the Soviet Union.

/ I hope that

EMP

I hope that you will be able to reassure Mr. Montgomery that a strict control is being exercised over Government funds both in Great Britain and Northern Ireland to prevent these being used to send competitors to the Games in the Soviet Union.

Yours sincerely,

MT

The Reverend Ian Paisley, MP