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IRELAND



Reference Code:	2000/6/144
Title:	Notes on a meeting with the British Ambassador by the Tánaiste, Frank Aiken
Creation Date(s):	8 January 1969
Level of description:	Item
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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8.1.1969. *VJA*

The British Ambassador came to see me this morning at my invitation. I spoke to him on the lines of the attached Note of the 9th instant to our London Embassy and emphasised the case against using Specials and for the immediate establishment of a fair and democratic voting system. The Ambassador reacted favourably and declared that he was altogether in favour of the adoption of a fair voting system and non-discrimination.

He asked whether I thought the British should, if asked supply British troops or British police for keeping order.

I said I thought it would be unwise for O'Neill to ask for British help; that he had sufficient regular police to maintain peace and protect parades if he organised them. I pointed out that we had withdrawn most of our Guards from the country areas and that O'Neill could do the same when a large force was necessary to deal with a threatened clash.

I said that O'Neill had at present all the moderates (95% of the total population) in favour of his policy of non-discrimination and had defeated the Orange extremists

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- 2 -

at the meetings of his political organisation and parliamentary group. The way out of O'Neill's situation was to go forward vigorously and establish immediately a fair electoral system for local elections and also for Stormont and Westminster.

I pointed out that all the principal parties here had agreed in 1921 that we would not try to re-unite Ireland by force and that our principal difficulty over the years was to meet the argument that the North would never allow Ireland to be re-united by peaceful democratic means; that partition was maintained by force; and that the only argument that the North would listen to was the gun.

I emphasised that I was not suggesting that Stormont should be coerced militarily or financially by Britain but that the British should point out to O'Neill that they carried the responsibility before the world for the Northern denial of democratic and human rights, and that under the 1920 Act they bore the ultimate responsibility for guaranteeing non-discrimination in the Six Counties. The legal responsibilities gave the British the right to press vigorously for the implementation of a fair
democratic/

- 3 -

democratic system. In short what was called for, and what would be supported by 95% of the Northern people was not repression of protests but quick and firm progress towards the implimentation of democratic principles.