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Report of press conference by Taoiseach in Government Buildings, Dublin, on Friday, 15th January, 1965, regarding his meeting with Six County Prime Minister.

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As reported in 'Irish Press' of 16/1/65.

The Taoiseach, Mr. Lemass, at a special press conference for Irish political correspondents in Government Buildings yesterday gave a detailed account of his history-making talks with Captain Terence O'Neill, the Six County Prime Minister, at Stormont on Thursday.

And Mr. Lemass said that the purpose of the discussions was to explore the possibility of co-operation in a number of areas for the general benefit of the Irish people, beginning with those where the political advantages were most obvious and where political differences were unlikely to be encountered.

The next step, he said, would be to consider and tabulate ideas for further discussions covering matters of trade, tourism, research, administration and so forth. There was, for example, in their view considerable scope for concerted action in the tourist field, including joint promotion efforts abroad and measures to encourage the greater interflow of holidaymakers between north and south.

"We have no doubt whatever," said Mr. Lemass, "that some people abroad are discouraged from coming for holidays to Ireland by doubts as to the significance for them of Border restrictions and those who do come often hesitate about moving freely from one area to another by reason of the Border. Of course, arrangements have already been made to eliminate many of these Border difficulties from this year on."

In that field and in others, periodic discussions on general development policy aims and methods would be mutually helpful. In the sphere of trade, it was to be recognised that trade and customs arrangements affecting the north were still largely the concern of the British Government.

"We are desirous," said Mr. Lemass, "of facilitating increased trade, which is a matter of building goodwill as much as the modification of tariff restrictions. It is anticipated that preliminary discussions on these matters will take place soon between Mr. Jack Lynch and Mr. Brian Faulkner. Mr. Faulkner is also concerned with tourist policy, and a meeting between him and Mr. Childers is also being considered.

There were many matters and difficulties associated with the Border which could be minimised or eliminated by administrative action. Now the regional development planning was entering a new phase in both areas, coordination of plans in such matters as roads, networks, water supply and sewerage facilities, drainage, surveys and research relating to physical planning, and the preservation of natural beauty in such locations as Loughs Foyle, Erne and Melvin would be worthwhile.

In health services, considerable benefits would follow from more closely coordinated arrangements, particularly in cases of urgency arising, say, from road accidents where prompt medical attention was essential.

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There would be considerable scope for economies in electricity distribution for a linking up of the high tension networks and from technical cooperation generally. It was, he thought, agreed that when the use of nuclear heat for electricity generation became economic, operation of a nuclear station on an All-Ireland basis would be essential because of the high capital cost involved.

There were problems affecting our sea fisheries that might be reduced or resolved by discussions about them.

~~When~~ Mr. Lemass said that in agriculture there would be advantage from a wider approach to research and development problems. The scope for the coordination of development plans in regard to agriculture should, he thought, prove to be very wide.

There were numerous other possibilities which they were now going to consider in detail. There was, of course, a great deal of practical cooperation at different levels at present, and the very fact of Thursday's meeting with Captain O'Neill and himself would encourage its extension and increase its usefulness.

Replying to questions, Mr. Lemass said there was no connection of any sort between the meeting and the forthcoming British trade talks.

When he was asked if the British Government had any part in arranging the meeting, he said he had no reason to think so. He had seen Captain O'Neill's statement that he informed the British Government in advance and obtained their approval "I should not have thought this necessary", he said. "The problems with which we are now concerned are Irish problems, which can best be dealt with by Irish people".

Mr. Lemass said matters affecting trade arrangements in the northern area were the concern of the British Government. They were anxious to promote the growth of trade, and in his opinion that was a matter for promoting goodwill as much as reducing tarriffs.

They had already modified and abolished some tarriffs. In doing so, they were in breach of all their other trade agreements, including their agreement with Britain, but the remarkable fact was that no Government in the world had taken exception to that action.

Mr. Lemass said his discussions with Captain O'Neill were very informal and relaxed. They were conducted in a friendly spirit and assured him of a genuine desire to continue the contacts.

"We will put down on paper our ideas on areas for exploration and as soon as they have been communicated and considered, there can be further discussions at top level," said Mr. Lemass. "The meeting between Mr. Lynch and Mr. Faulkner can go ahead in the meantime, but there is no definite arrangement."

Mr. Lemass went on to say that no political ~~measures which can result in advantages for ordinary Irish people who have to make their livelihoods wherever they live in Ireland.~~ issues of any kind were touched upon in the talks. "We were concerned only with practical measures which can result in advantages for ordinary Irish people who have to make their livelihoods wherever they live in Ireland."

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In the long distance dialogue between Capt. O'Neill and himself over the last couple of years, Mr. Lemass said, he had tried to make our position clear, as well as to indicate our desire to do whatever was feasible in particular fields of economic and social importance. This was the work which was now about to begin. There would, no doubt, be some speculation as to what might come of it in the longer term.

"I am personally a great believer in the view that when people begin to work together and find it useful, it is a habit that is likely to grow," said Mr. Lemass.

Referring to the secrecy which preceded the talks, Mr. Lemass said he did not think that advance speculation and comment about the scope and significance of the meeting in the newspapers in Dublin and Belfast would have been helpful.

He had been greatly encouraged by the very favourable comments forthcoming from all quarters. It was clear to him that public opinion, both north and south, had welcomed the prospects held out by their meeting.

Addition reported in 'Irish Times' of 16/1/65.

In a question to the Taoiseach last Friday I tried to describe what had happened by saying to the Taoiseach that a week ago a state of cold war existed between North and South, but that now, after his visit, that state of cold war had been replaced by a state of warm friendship. The Taoiseach replied: "Yes: things can never be the same again."

Books on S. 13087<sup>H</sup> (Tourism)  
S. 1955 (Customs Barriers)  
S. 17488 (Development Areas)  
S. 13444<sup>Q</sup> (Health Services)

and on folders and speeches file

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