

NATIONAL ARCHIVES**IRELAND**

Reference Code: 2003/16/466

Title: Report of proceedings of the third and final day of talks held at Darlington, England, on the subject of power-sharing and devolution in Northern Ireland, sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs by the Embassy of Great Britain to Ireland.

Creation Date(s): 28 September, 1972

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 4 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.



ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

101 1. Ryan 11.11.72

2. Mr. O'Dowd

Chief 27/11

M. MacF...
[Signature]

Recd 29/9/72
3.45 pm L
[Signature]

Confidential

28 September 1972

Dear O'Dowd

I enclose herewith copy of a record of the third and final day of the Darlington talks received from Mr. Peter Evans of the British Embassy.

Yours sincerely

[Handwritten signature]

H. J. O'Dowd Esq.
Department of the Taoiseach

CONFIDENTIAL



RECORD OF THE THIRD DAY OF THE DARLINGTON TALKS

The Wednesday session at Darlington began with a short statement by Mr Faulkner emphasising the importance of the police being entirely responsible to the local administration, and supporting this basic contention with various assertions and examples of his own choosing and colouring. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland immediately explained that, given his role as an independent chairman, he preferred to elicit the views of others and would not himself enter into a possibly contentious debate: he was sure that no one would assume that because a particular remark went without comment it meant that Her Majesty's Government necessarily agreed. This left Mr Faulkner beating the air.

Mr O'Neill repeated that the Alliance Party based all their arguments for a regional assembly on the assumption that the traditionally divisive subject of security was firmly vested with Westminster. Thereafter he played little part in the debate, but Mr Simpson fought steadily and doughtily against Mr Faulkner who, frustrated in his attempts to force a row with the Secretary of State, became even more extreme in his assertions and unconvincing in his excuses. There were occasional pained interjections from Mr O'Neill beginning "Does Mr Faulkner seriously believe that ...". Towards the close the Secretary of State repeated that he had not, as Chairman, corrected statements made, but that Mr Faulkner's remark that there was no evidence that since direct rule cooperation from the Republic had improved and that indeed it may even have deteriorated deserved comment, lest a false impression were given. Details could not be divulged, but it was fair to say that although more could be done, and things we wanted done remained undone, nonetheless he believed the Republic was seeking to help.

Summing up, the Secretary of State said all were agreed that lawlessness must be suppressed, and that as a long-term

CONFIDENTIAL



objective the police should be the means of maintaining law and order. All agreed control of the Army remained with Her Majesty's Government. But the Unionists disagreed with the N.I.L.P. and the Alliance Party on control of security.

There followed a brief discussion on other aspects of the link with Westminster, in which all delegates agreed that since Northern Ireland was in a very difficult economic situation, the best possible treatment by Her Majesty's Government was to be looked for.

The afternoon session began with North-South relations. Mr. O'Neill referred to the new situation brought about by EEC membership, which suggested that in certain fields increased cooperation would be sensible on an all-Ireland basis, and perhaps also on a British Isles basis. Possible examples were tourism, animal health, and the dead meat trade. This unexciting list led to an unexciting discussion. Points of interest were Mr Simpson's emphasis on the need for the Republic of Ireland to recognise Northern Ireland, and Mr O'Neill's return to his argument that a good North-South relationship demanded a better system of extradition. Mr Faulkner agreed with both points, which though moderately expressed were evidently matters arousing some feeling in the N.I.L.P. and the Alliance Party.

As to machinery, Mr Faulkner preferred an inter-governmental Council: Mr Simpson, while not excluding machinery at Governmental level, thought others outside Government had much to offer, and Mr O'Neill preferred a council involving parliamentarians from Westminster, Dublin and Belfast.

That concluded the subjects for discussion. The conference then agreed that they would prefer the Secretary of State as Chairman to make a statement on behalf of the conference, leaving each delegation thereafter to speak for itself. All delegates paid warm tribute to the Secretary of State's chairmanship and agreed the conference had been worthwhile.

CONFIDENTIAL



The Secretary of State then summed up, drawing upon a prepared passage. Particular points were

- a. In any settlement it will be necessary to take account of the interests of the United Kingdom as a whole.
- b. Any solution must command not only a substantial consensus in the Province, but also a similar consensus at Westminster.
- c. Any settlement must bear in mind certain facts. First, the known United Kingdom commitment on the Border. Second, the need for "careful and realistic attention to the financial relationship". This, whatever the solution, Her Majesty's Government must have a powerful voice in the preservation of law and order. Fourth, any future administration must take account of the MacRory reforms. Finally, the implications of EEC membership.
- d. It is impossible for any community to live totally divorced from the rest of the world.
- e. Her Majesty's Government will publish as soon as possible a green paper setting out "the various constitutional possibilities which have been suggested".
- f. There would have to be further consultations with interested parties and organisations but there was no commitment to another conference.

On timing, no precise dates were stated, but it was generally indicated that the green paper would precede the local government elections, due in December. The date of the referendum depended upon Parliament and no date could be given.

BRITISH EMBASSY
DUBLIN

28 September 1972

- 3 -

CONFIDENTIAL