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Title: Copy letter from Donal O’Sullivan, Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain, to R McDonagh, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Foreign Affairs, reporting a meeting with Stewart Crawford, Deputy Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, mainly relating to the conference on the future of Northern Ireland held in Darlington, England, during September.

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Personal and Confidential

October 4th 1972

Dear Assistant Secretary

I called, at my request, yesterday afternoon on Sir Stewart Crawford, Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He had with him Mr. Kelvin White who had attended the Darlington Conference. As Ambassador Peck has, I gather, already given a fairly full account of the conference it is not necessary for me to go into the matter in detail.

I used the occasion of my call to deliver a Third Party Note asking for an early British assurance that the principle of liability for claims in respect of damage resulting from road cratering will be accepted by the authorities here. In handing over the Note I explained to Sir Stewart that this was not at all the main purpose of my call on him and that the Note arose from an instruction I had received on the previous day from the Department. His reaction to the Note was a little acid. In an obvious reference to Strasbourg he said "Your Government seems quite determined to squeeze us in every way". My reply was "Perhaps we should leave Strasbourg for another day as I am not filled-in on details". There was no further reference to the matter in the course of our talk.

The rest of the conversation was on the Darlington Conference and on follow-up activity. The following is, I think, a fair summary of the main points which emerged in relation to the conference itself:-

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- (1) The conference was a useful exercise not only because it provided an opportunity for frank expressions of views but also and, more importantly, because it indicated areas of possible agreement between the parties represented.
- (2) There was general agreement that the UDI is a non-starter.
- (3) There was equally general agreement that integration in the sense of Scotland or Wales is a non-starter.
- (4) There was general agreement on the need for an Assembly, but Faulkner's views on its structure and functions differed from those of the others.
- (5) All favoured a uni-cameral structure, the number of places in the Assembly to be somewhere between seventy and a hundred.
- (6) In Mr. Whitelaw's view the Northern Ireland representatives who attended could, without too much difficulty, be persuaded to agree to having PR as the system of election to the Assembly. Rumour has it that Mr. Faulkner would now see possible advantage to his Party in a PR system.
- (7) The discussion on responsibility for security was acrimonious and got nowhere. Mr. Faulkner did his utmost during this part of the discussion to goad Mr. Whitelaw into losing his temper and making statements on which Faulkner might capitalise on his return home.
- (8) The discussion on North/South relations in the new setup was, on the whole, superficial even though all agreed on the need for closer working arrangements. A Council of Ireland as such did not appear to have been mentioned. Simpson seemed to be thinking in terms of a tripartite setup. Pheilm O'Neill's contribution was "inane". He advocated closer cooperation on tourism, cattle and a third item.

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- (9) A point which struck me forcefully was the attitude of hostility to Mr. Faulkner displayed by Sir Stewart in all his references to him.

The foregoing completes the picture insofar as the conference itself was concerned.

I then questioned Sir Stewart and Mr. White as to what the next moves are likely to be. Mr. Whitelaw has had many calls on his time since Darlington and it can be taken that he will have little opportunity to give thought to the next stage until after the Party Conference next week. According to Sir Stewart, the Government would very much like to be able to release the Green Paper in a month from now but it is not at all certain that this will be possible. Completion of the Green Paper is being treated as a matter of special urgency. Apart from covering the various proposals already advanced it will probably have to contain suggestions from the Government here as to the possible solutions. The content of these suggestions and the method of their presentation will require a lot of serious and detailed consideration.

It is not certain that there will be another conference on the lines of Darlington but some form of consultation with the different political interests will have to be attempted. It was probably just as well that the SDLP did not attend Darlington as they may have walked out in the middle of the conference. It is now clear that Paisley's non-attendance had nothing to do with the enquiry he sought. It was simply a move to build himself up and to avoid committing himself one way or another at this stage.

It now seems highly unlikely that legislation to deal

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with the North can be introduced in Parliament here before the new year. It should not be difficult to get legislation through the House quickly because of the effective way in which the bipartisan policy is operating. Even if legislation is passed quickly it is hardly likely that all the necessary arrangements for a new structure in the North could be completed by the end of the period of prorogation. While nobody in the Government wants to extend prorogation, a brief extension is, however, at this stage, a strong possibility.

Yours sincerely

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