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Title: Report by Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain D O'Sullivan of his meeting with Mr Trevelyn of the Northern Ireland Office, discussing a possible caretaker administration in Northern Ireland following the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive.

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Report from Ambassador in London on his call
at Northern Ireland Office, afternoon of 29
May, 1974

1. The Ambassador saw Mr. Trevelyn, Assistant Secretary, NIO, who informed him that nothing had been decided yet since Ministers were still meeting at the time. However, two announcements are likely later this evening. The first will announce the setting up of a caretaker administration and the composition of this would be announced tomorrow. The second will announce the recall of Parliament for Tuesday or Wednesday of next week. These are proposed decisions which have gone into the Cabinet and are therefore subject to any revisions that might be made at the Cabinet level.
2. As regards the composition of a caretaker administration, the minds of Ministers have not yet been made up but the temporary administration would probably consist of civil servants, a couple of people from the Northern Ireland Assembly, a Junior Minister from Whitehall and a few outsiders. The civil servants would comprise selected Secretaries of Departments in Northern Ireland. No Whitehall civil servants would be included.
3. The official view in London is that they want to preserve the fabric of the Constitution Act. As regards the Assembly, this would probably be prorogued rather than dissolved. Fresh elections were not ruled out at this stage but Trevelyn agreed with the Ambassador's view that it would be inadvisable to have elections at this stage. After the caretaker administration takes over, it is likely that the possibility of forming a new Executive will be explored.

4. Trevelyn then turned to matters of what he called "unfinished business". He wondered whether we could now move ahead on the law enforcement legislation and he also enquired whether arrangements could proceed for the meeting on security. The Ambassador said that it seemed a bit much to expect early movement in these matters since he thought we would have to "test the temperature of the water first".
5. Trevelyn also said that they in London were disturbed at the criticism in our press of the way in which the strike had been handled by the British Government, and he asked whether we could do anything about this. The Ambassador said that we could not dictate to the press what they should say and he also referred to the criticism which had appeared in the press in Britain.
6. The Ambassador said that he would be in touch with a senior Conservative M.P., Mr. William Deedes, during the course of the evening to ascertain the reaction in Conservative ranks following the meeting of the Shadow Cabinet under Sir Alec Douglas Home, which was due to take place following Sir Alec's consultation with the Prime Minister. The impression he had, however, was that the bipartisan approach to Northern Ireland at Westminster was likely to continue.
7. The above information was conveyed to Mr. Nally, for the information of the Taoiseach and to the Minister in Paris, immediately after it was received by telephone from the Ambassador.

c.c. Mr. Nally (Dept. of the Taoiseach)
Secretary,
Mr. Donlon,
Mr. Swift,
Mr. Ó Broin.