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ROINN AN TAOISIGH
DEPARTMENT OF THE TAOISEACH

BAILE ATHA CLIATH

27 May, 1975



Foreign Affairs

Secretary 8/5
to Kelly 28/5
to David 28/5
to V. Jones

Dea-Mhéin
Rúnaí Parlaiminte
an Taoisigh

1. Mr. M. McCarthy
To SA, etc.
2. blank
For main NT
file mk 28.5.75

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Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of last
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and Committee, and Ulster Unionist members.

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course we assured them that we would not publicise the
meeting or their identities.

Molyneaux did most of the talking on their side. He was quiet
and self-contained. Of the other two, Ross was the more un-
forthcoming, and seemed a fairly crusty character; young, but
with a slightly sinister expression reminiscent of Ernest Blyth.

Molyneaux, surprisingly, appeared not pessimistic about the Con-
vention. In particular, he expressed annoyance at a Belfast
Telegraph editorial of the preceding Friday which, he said, had
contained wildly inaccurate representations about the progress
of the Convention, quite contrary - according to inside in-
formation which he said he had - to what actually was occur-
ing. He volunteered, in addition, the opinion that if the
power-sharing executive had not been associated fatally in the
public mind with the Council of Ireland after Sunningdale, two
things would have happened: (i) cooperation with the Republic
on a practical, ad hoc basis in various fields would have
developed naturally; (ii) the power-sharing executive itself
- which he was opposed to on other, additional grounds which
he did not mention - would still have fallen, but it would
have been a longer, more difficult job to break it up.

Ross did not speak much, but did - surprisingly - ask us
out of the blue what our opinion would be on repartition. The
entire delegation replied briefly that it could not be con-
sidered. Ross also said that the SDLP did not, as they claimed
represent the minority, some of whom - he said - voted UUC

Molyneaux agreed, on being asked by O'Kennedy, that the North
and ourselves would share common interests in EEC contexts, but
did not suggest anything concrete.

The Unionists did not enquire about our extra-territorial juris-
diction Bill (one of the Conservative members had done so, and
was told by me that I did not see how time could allow its
final passage before the autumn at earliest). They did, howeve
raise the question of our Article 3; and at this point the dis-
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SEEN BY

TAOISEACH

Minister for Foreign Affairs

cc. Taoiseach
Mr Donlon

I was in London on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of last week with Deputies Harte, Bermingham, O'Kennedy, Brugha and Cunningham. We met, at various times, Lord Goronwy-Roberts (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Mr Stan Orme M.P. (Minister of State, N.I. Office), and groups representing the Anglo-Irish group of the I.P.U., the Back-Bench Northern Ireland Committee, and Ulster Unionist members.

The Ulster Unionists who came to meet us were Messrs Molyneux Dunlop and Ross; and they were accompanied at first by Lord Digby, who did not stay long and said nothing. The three M.P. however stayed with the six of us (no others present) for over an hour. They seemed unembarrassed by the encounter, though of course we assured them that we would not publicise the meeting or their identities.

Molyneux did most of the talking on their side. He was quiet and self-contained. Of the other two, Ross was the more unforthcoming, and seemed a fairly crusty character; young, but with a slightly sinister expression reminiscent of Ernest Blyth.

Molyneux, surprisingly, appeared not pessimistic about the Convention. In particular, he expressed annoyance at a Belfast Telegraph editorial of the preceding Friday which, he said, had contained wildly inaccurate representations about the progress of the Convention, quite contrary - according to inside information which he said he had - to what actually was occurring. He volunteered, in addition, the opinion that if the power-sharing executive had not been associated fatally in the public mind with the Council of Ireland after Sunningdale, two things would have happened: (i) cooperation with the Republic on a practical, ad hoc basis in various fields would have developed naturally; (ii) the power-sharing executive itself - which he was opposed to on other, additional grounds which he did not mention - would still have fallen, but it would have been a longer, more difficult job to break it up.

Ross did not speak much, but did - surprisingly - ask us out of the blue what our opinion would be on repartition. The entire delegation replied briefly that it could not be considered. Ross also said that the SDLP did not, as they claimed, represent the minority, some of whom - he said - voted UUC.

Molyneux agreed, on being asked by O'Kennedy, that the North and ourselves would share common interests in EEC contexts, but did not suggest anything concrete.

The Unionists did not enquire about our extra-territorial jurisdiction Bill (one of the Conservative members had done so, and was told by me that I did not see how time could allow its final passage before the autumn at earliest). They did, however, raise the question of our Article 3; and at this point the discussion took a turn for the worse, because O'Kennedy and Brugha attempted to argue that the Article did not contain any claim



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DUBLIN

to rule the North. I could not forbear to differ from them openly on this impossible sophistry. This was all the more unfortunate as it came towards the end of what otherwise had been a peaceable and civilised exchange, and the Dublin side more or less ended up all talking together, with the Unionists silent.

The whole meeting was however cordial, and Molyneaux volunteered, somewhat to my surprise, that further such meetings would be welcome to them. He did not suggest time or place and was not specific about anything in this regard, but my impression was that an approach from our side after a suitable interval would not be badly received.

The British organisers were on the whole a bit surprised that the Unionists had agreed to see us at all, and we were all pleased by the encounter. I wrote a personal note to Molyneaux the next day from the London Embassy saying we had been very interested and appreciative and that I hoped further meetings would be possible.

The meeting with Orme I did not find much good. I had not met him before, and so do not know his form, but he struck me as somewhat loud, rambling and expostulatory. He said HMG would not "sanction" any NI settlement not acquiesced in by the minority, but did not say that HMG would refuse to permit any such settlement (as distinct from merely not "sanctioning" it). He went on to stress that only "negative" options were open to them, i.e. they could veto this or that but could not impose anything. He said the "troops out" movement in Britain was weak and getting weaker - the Birmingham massacre, he said, had oddly enough weakened the movement rather than otherwise. He was defensive and, I thought, a bit resentful when I said it was difficult to understand the release of all Loyalist detainees; these, he said, came from areas where the police were accepted and tended to be able to get regular prosecutions on foot. He said the "incident centres" were working well and no one ever made a fuss about them nowadays. He said they were starting an exhaustive re-registration of legally held firearms - though the evidence was that guns used in sectarian murders were illegally held. He said one or two cross-border projects were now being jointly considered; this is contrary to my last information - which was that we and the British were deadlocked on how extensive the nature of such projects should be - but I did not contradict him.

Perhaps Deputy Harte might be asked for his impressions of these various discussions.

*John
JKelly
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Taoiseach & to the MF7. A.H.*