



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/95/34

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Accession Conditions: Open

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

25

ÁRD CHONSALACHT NA HÉIREANN
TELEPHONE: (617) 267-9330
FACSIMILE: (617) 267-6375



CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND
535 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116

Confidential

Mr. Gerry Corr
Anglo Irish Division

Handwritten notes:
W. J. M. H. K. P.
T. de: P.
Jan. 14/15.

May 10, 1993

**Visit of Northern Ireland Secretary of State
Sir Patrick Mayhew to Boston 6 - 7 May 1993**

The programme followed by the Northern Ireland Secretary is attached. I was invited to and attended the Irish American Partnership luncheon and the British Consul's General dinner for the Secretary of State. At the Partnership lunch about 40 people showed (see attached list). The principal attendees included some of the IAP Board members and Brian Donnelly. The numbers and influence of those attending was noticeably less than the IAP normally attract. The following were some of the points the Secretary of State made in his speech after lunch:

The Secretary of State talked about the need to return to negotiations. The English he said could not dictate what the final outcome would be. That would have to be left to the parties in Northern Ireland. The British Government's role would be to give the talks "direction and focus" and influence the "process" by which these talks would come about. There was no mention of the Irish Government's role in all of this. He said the British Government was not in Northern Ireland for economic interests. Like Wales and Scotland he asserted Northern Ireland was part of the U.K. They would continue to govern until a majority of people there wished otherwise.

During question time he refused to answer a question from Tom McNiff, a local correspondent for Reuters and also sometime stringer for the Irish Independent, who asked if the British Government had brought pressure to bear on President Clinton to block the appointment of a U.S. Special Envoy to Northern Ireland. The N.I. Secretary of State said rather testily that negotiations between the White House and the British Government were confidential and he would not respond to the question. Tom McNiff told me after that he was quite pleased with the response as he took it as a clear indication that the British Government had made a major issue of the Special Envoy question with the Clinton Administration and were still clearly worried by it.

That evening I attended dinner at the Consul's General residence in Boston in honour of the Secretary of State. There were 28 people at the function. Again the attendees were Irish American though about half the guests were from the official party and the British Consulate. Sir Patrick spoke briefly at dinner saying only that he was optimistic for the future and negotiations.

During coffee he spoke to me privately about the North. (I found him much more personable on a one to one basis than he came across in public. Many people have said they found his manner to be a little pompous and very different to Peter Brooke). Among the points he made during our conversation were:

He found the Reverend Ian Paisley to be a major stumbling block to progress in the North. He had nothing positive to offer and was set to disrupt any progress that might be made. After his Coleraine speech he met Reverend Paisley for 1 1/2 hours and while he harangued him in general terms over the speech the only specific point he made was against place names in Irish. The Secretary of State added that the only way of dealing with Ian Paisley is to shout him down "like all bullies he is a coward when taken on".

On Jim Molyneux, he was very positive saying Molyneux "had only 2 years to go before he steps down" but that before going he wanted to have a political process in place.

The Secretary of State was quite concerned about the upcoming local election in Northern Ireland saying that if the DUP were seen to loose ground this would auger well for negotiations. The contrary on the other hand would he said also be true.

He said he was very annoyed by the way his interview was reported in Die Zeit. He was still quite upset that the reporter did not allow the correction which he said he inserted immediately after he realised that "happily" was a pejorative word in the context of pulling out of Northern Ireland.

Speaking about John Hume the Secretary of State said, that while he recognises he has done enormously useful work in Northern Ireland, he nevertheless believes John Hume is not helping to restart the negotiations. The Secretary of State said he regretted the way he had handled John Hume during the negotiations when he believes their relationship got off to a bad start. He could not he said understand why John Hume had come up with and stuck to the proposals involving the EC which he said would never be accepted by the Unionists.

(I said that John Hume and the SDLP had a genuine desire for a reasonable settlement and would not be found wanting if there was a hope of genuine negotiations. I added that the SDLP would not agree to an internal settlement without the wider dimension of relationships between the rest of Ireland as well as Britain).

The Secretary of State made a point of saying that he had a very good working relationship with the Tanaiste.

David Fell with whom I had only a brief few words said that they had a successful trip but he was not pleased with a speech which the Secretary of State had delivered at Bill Flynn's lunch in New York. He put it down to tiredness. I gather that among other things they felt that the Secretary of State's statement to the effect that Northern Ireland was as British as Scotland and Wales was not well received by his audience.

The Committee for a New Ireland had a question and answer session with the Northern Ireland Secretary on the evening of 6 May. (see note from Vice Consul attached).

I am told that Cardinal Law during his meeting with the SOS welcomed the attempts at restarting negotiations but hoped that in doing so the British Government would respect the Nationalist as well as the Unionist dimension. The Cardinal asked the Secretary of State about confidence question, fair employment and education, especially the treatment of Catholic schools. The Cardinal told Brian Donnelly, when they met on Friday morning before the former had lunch with the Northern Secretary, that he would tell Sir Patrick that Americans were still concerned about the treatment of Catholics in Northern Ireland and that they would hold the British Government responsible for lack of progress on human rights abuses.

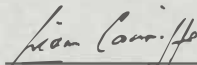
Conclusion:

I formed the impression that the British were not overjoyed with the trip - however they felt that this type of visit has to be undertaken and that in doing so inroads are made each time. They certainly think that with the departure of Mayor Flynn from Boston to the Holy See they will have lost their most influential adversary on the Special Envoy proposal. Mayor Flynn apparently used probably his last occasion as Mayor of Boston to impart a strong message to the Northern Secretary (see note from the Vice Consul attached).

Apart from the obvious set back in New York I got the feeling that they were happy to have met with a good cross section of Irish Americans and while they would not win them over completely they nevertheless hoped to be able to give to the majority they met a message of at worst moving in the right direction towards resolving the Northern Ireland problem and at best that the British Government were neutral in trying to resolve a conflict between the two intransigent Irish communities in Northern Ireland.

Sir Patrick, unlike Peter Brooke, appears somewhat pompous to American audiences and his speeches did not help that image.

Enclosed are copies of the local press coverage in the Boston Globe and in the Boston Herald. (Incidentally, the BBC were with the Secretary of State for the full duration of his trip. I understand that they intend to use this material in a future profile of the Secretary of State.


Liam Canniffe
Consul General