

E.R.

CONFIDENTIAL

AJM/752/SB

cc PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Brennan
Mr Fell
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Mr Reeve

338/2

Mr Bloomfield



~~FOL/9~~
F/10

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. You may wish to see the recent DFP paper on the unemployment statistics in Northern Ireland which illustrate what we know is an acute problem of influencing historic trends.

2. There is an overlap here with the McBride principles with their intention of remedying what is basically a structural problem of imbalance. I mentioned to David Fell my concern about our response, bearing in mind the apparent sophistication of Mr Harrison Goldin's review of the Northern Ireland position and the extent to which many of his facts and figures are paralleled by the facts on the ground (in DFP papers including that most recently by Mr Sweeney). We may fault the American paper for the way it attributes some of the causes of deprivation and proscribes change, but it is difficult not to accept a good deal of their analysis about the depth of deprivation. The Goldin Report may be deficient but it is not easy to dismiss it out of hand. I think there is a need for a much more comprehensive look at how to respond on the McBride principles which could lead to our pointing to more constructive ways of taking positive action than a rather simplistic fall-back on what amounts to use of quotas and targets. I think Mr Fell, to whom I am copying papers, has it in mind to look at this further. I think this would be helpful in getting the Northern Ireland Economic Policy, IDB and BTDO views in line.

3. I do not think we can brazen our way through this development in America and need for our own use, and that of companies here, a clear and crisp document which recognises the facts, points out the problems but suggests that the Government is developing a positive, rather than an ineffective and negative, approach.

A J MERIFIELD

14 February 1985

J 13/2

cc Mr Stromfield
cc Mr Fell.
cc Mr Reeve.

London: Mr. Brown, Mr. Lyon.

RELIGION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A. Background

1. The only currently available source of regular and up to date information on unemployment levels by religious denomination in NI is the Continuous Household Survey which began in 1983.
2. The figures included below are based on data obtained from the 1983 and 1984 CHS surveys.
3. In addition, a supplementary questionnaire attached to the Labour Force Survey recorded the religion of all individuals in households sampled by LFS in 1984. Estimates of unemployment levels by religion have also been obtained from this.
4. Brief details of the surveys and the classification by religious denomination are given in the Annex together with tables.

B. Unemployment levels

1. In both 1983 and 1984 CHS recorded an overall unemployment rate of 19% of the economically active adult population. The LFS recorded an overall unemployment rate of 17% in 1984. (Differences between the methods employed in the two surveys may explain the slight discrepancy between these estimates.)
2. There is a marked contrast between the unemployment rates of the Catholic and non-Catholic sections of the samples. Approximately twice as many economically active Catholics are unemployed compared with their non-Catholic counterparts (Tables 1a, 1b, 3).
3. CHS recorded an overall unemployment rate for Catholics of 29% in 1983 and 27% in 1984. Almost a quarter of Catholic respondents in LFS were unemployed. This figure compares with an unemployment rate for non-Catholic respondents of between 13% and 14% across the three surveys.
4. Levels of unemployment, recorded by CHS, showed little change between 1983 and 1984. A small drop in overall Catholic unemployment was accounted for primarily by an increase in the proportion of Catholic females in full-time employment. The magnitude of this change is small and within the sampling error of the survey estimates.
5. The distinction between the unemployment rates of Catholics and non-Catholics is greatest for the male population. In 1984, 35% of Catholic males were unemployed compared with 15% of non-Catholics.

6. Catholic females also have higher unemployment rates (16% in 1984) than non-Catholics (11%) but not to such a marked degree as males. The proportions of females from both groups in full-time employment are equivalent, the difference being accounted for by the greater proportion of non-Catholic females in part-time employment.

C. Current Unemployment

1. Of those persons who were unemployed at the time of the survey, 38% of Catholics had been unemployed more than 2 years compared with 29% of non-Catholics in 1983 (Table 2 (a)).
2. Overall, the worsening situation of the unemployed is reflected in the increase in long term unemployment (more than 2 years) between 1983 (37%) and 1984 (44%). Although both groups displayed an increase in long term unemployment between 1983 and 1984, almost half of unemployed Catholics (49%) had been unemployed for more than 2 years in 1984 compared with 36% of non-Catholics.
3. The more recent increase in unemployment rates for non-Catholics is reflected in the greater proportions of this group who were currently experiencing their first period of unemployment in the last two years (a gap which widened between 1983 and 1984) and substantially larger proportion who had been unemployed for less than one year. The proportion of Catholics reporting their first period of unemployment in two years and the proportion unemployed for less than one year dropped considerably between 1983 and 1984 as more of this group moved into the long term unemployed category.
4. As a proportion of economically active persons, 13% of Catholics, in 1984, had been unemployed for 2 years or more compared with 5% of non-Catholics.

D. The Employment Status of 16-24 year olds

1. In 1983, 20% of 16-24 year olds were unemployed, a figure which differed little from the rate of unemployment amongst all economically active persons in the sample. The 1984 CHS recorded an unemployment rate of 22% amongst 16-24 year olds compared with 19% for all economically active persons. Similarly, the 1984 LFS shows that unemployment among 16-24 year olds (19%) is higher than that for all economically active (17%). (Tables 4a, 4b, 4c).
2. Unemployment among Catholic 16-24 year olds is no different from that of all economically active Catholics in any of the surveys. However, unemployment amongst non-Catholic 16-24 year olds is higher than for the whole economically active non-Catholic group. In 1984 CHS recorded 18% of non-Catholic 16-24 year olds unemployed

compared with 14% for the whole non-Catholic group. Similarly 16% of 16-24 year olds sampled by LFS in 1984 were unemployed compared with 13% for the whole non-Catholic group.

3. Unemployment rates among Catholic 16-24 year olds are considerably higher than their non-Catholic counterparts and a greater proportion of Catholics in this age group are attending school or college. These differences are reflected most clearly in the proportions of the two groups who are in employment, either full or part-time. In 1984, 56% of 16-24 year old non-Catholics sampled by CHS were currently in employment compared with 39% of Catholics in the same age group. The figures from the 1984 LFS (Table 4c) give a very similar picture.

E. Summary

The results of three sample surveys over the period 1983 to 1984 illustrate that unemployment rates amongst Catholics are approximately twice those of non-Catholics. This distinction is greater when males only are considered.

Of the unemployed, those who are Catholic experience long term unemployment to a much greater degree than non-Catholics with half of the Catholic unemployed being unemployed for more than two years.

Catholics in the younger age groups (16-24 years) similarly experience higher unemployment than their non-Catholic counterparts. Unlike younger Catholics, non-Catholics in the 16-24 year age group have slightly higher unemployment rates than the non-Catholic group as a whole.

K F SWEENEY
Social Division
12 February 1985

cc: Dr Harbison
Mr Stevenson
Mr Leonard

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ANNEXE

1. The Surveys

a. The Continuous Household Survey

The Continuous Household Survey samples approximately 1% of households in the Province over a 1 year period. The contacting and interviewing of households is carried out on a regular basis throughout the year.

An attempt is made to interview each adult aged 16 years or over in co-operating households. Detailed information on current employment status, unemployment etc is collected from each adult interviewed. Where an individual refuses to co-operate or is absent from the household, information on economic activity is collected by proxy.

A question on religious denomination is included in a separate section of each individual questionnaire. Religious denomination is not recorded by proxy.

The response rate to CHS was 71% in 1984.

b. The Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey, like CHS, samples 1% of households within NI but all contact and interviewing is completed within a 6 week field period in April and May.

The information on economic activity etc recorded by LFS for persons aged 16 or over in the household may be collected by proxy.

In 1984 DED agreed to a request from PPRU to attach a supplementary questionnaire to LFS which included only one additional question, that on religious denomination. Where responses to LFS had been accepted by proxy for an individual religious denomination was also accepted by proxy.

The response rate to LFS in 1984 was 90%.

2. The coding of economic activity

In both surveys, all individuals who had a full-time or part-time job in the week before interview were coded as 'Working'.

Those who were waiting to take up a job, looking for work or on a YTP scheme were treated as 'unemployed'.

3. The coding of religious denomination

Religious denomination was coded in CHS according to that specifically stated by the respondent.

The non-Catholic group includes all specific denominations stated, other than Roman Catholic. This group also includes individuals who specifically stated that they do not belong to any denominational group.

When individuals refused to state which denominational group they belonged to (approx. 1% of respondents) or were not interviewed they were assigned to the 'Undefined' group.

The same coding of religious denomination was used for LFS. When individuals interviewed refused to state which denominational group they belonged to they were coded as 'religion not known'.

Table 1a Unemployment by Religion and Sex 1983
 Percentage of economically active persons aged 16 and over

		Unemployed	Working full-time	Working part-time	Base (= 100%)
<u>Catholic</u>	Males	36 ←	61	3	696
	Females	18	52	30	434
	Overall	29	57	13	1130
<u>Non-Catholic</u>	Males	17	80 ←	3	1087
	Females	10	53	36	749
	Overall	14	69	17	1836
<u>Undefined</u>	Males	17	83	0	427
	Females	11	84	4	89
	Overall	16	83	1	516
<u>Total</u>	Males	23	75	3	2210
	Females	13	55	32	1272
	Total	19	67	13	3482

JL-5.1a

Table 1b Unemployment by Religion and Sex 1984
 Percentage of economically active persons aged 16 and over

		Unemployed	Working full-time	Working part-time	Base (= 100%)
<u>Catholic</u>	Males	35	63	2	824
	Females	16	57	27	556
	Overall	27	61	12	1380
<u>Non-Catholic</u>	Males	15	82	3	1181
	Females	11	56	32	903
	Overall	14	71	15	2084
<u>Undefined</u>	Males	18	81	1	535
	Females	15	75	10	133
	Overall	17	80	3	668
<u>Total</u>	Males	22	76	2	2540
	Females	13	58	29	1592
	Total	19	69	12	4132

JL-5.1b

Table 2a Length of Unemployment and number of times in 2 years 1983
Percentage of Unemployment persons only

	(a) No. of times in 2 years				(b) Length of current unemployment			
	1	2	3+	Unemployed over 2 years	Up to 1 years	1-2 years	Over 2 years	Base (= 100%)
Catholic	41	7	2	38	34	17	38	331
Non-Catholic	44	12	3	34	41	18	34	260
Total	42	9	3	37	37	17	37	591

*There were a further 9% of respondents for whom data was not available

Table 2b Length of Unemployment and number to times in 2 years 1984
Percentage of unemployment aged 16 and over

	(a) No. of times in 2 years				(b) Length of current unemployment			
	1	2	3+	Unemployed over 2 years	Up to 1 year	1-2 years	Over 2 years	Base (= 100%)
Catholic	32	6	3	49 ← (from 381 in 83)	28	16	49	374
Non-Catholic	41	8	2	36	37	15	36	284
Total	36	7	3	44	31	15	44	658

JL-5.1c

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

Table 3 Unemployment rates by Religion and Sex 1984
Economically active persons aged 16 and over

		Unemployed	Working full-time	Working part-time	Base (= 100%)
<u>Catholic</u>	Males	30	67	3	1126
	Females	15	57	27	715
	Overall	24	63	13	1841
<u>Non-Catholic</u>	Males	14	83	3	2189
	Females	12	56	32	1391
	Overall	13	73	14	3580
<u>Religion Not Known</u>	Males	21	79	-	68
	Females	11	67	22	45
	Overall	17	74	9	113
<u>Total</u>	Males	19	77	3	3391
	Females	13	57	30	2156
	Overall	17	69	14	5547

JL-5.1d

Table 4a Employment status of 16-24 year olds by religion 1983
All 16-24 year olds

	Unemployed	Working	YTP	At School or College	Other	Base (= 100%)
Catholic	28	35	2	23	11	488
Non-Catholic	20	49	2	20	9	536
Undefined	10	34	1	8	46	319
Total	20	40	2	19	19	1343

Table 4b Employment Status of 16-24 year olds by religion 1984
All 16-24 year olds

	Unemployed	Working full-time	Working part-time	At School or College	Other	Base (= 100%)
Catholic	28	35	4	24	9	574
Non-Catholic	18	54	2	19	6	563
Undefined	17	32	0	20	5	380
Total	22	41	2	21	7	1517

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 1984

Table 4c Economic activity of 16-24 year olds by religion
All 16-24 year olds

	Unemployed	Working full-time	Working part-time	At School or College	Other	Base (= 100%)
Catholic	24	36	3	22	14	857
Non-Catholic	16	50	4	20	10	1180
Religion Not Known	13	51	3	15	10	39
Total	19	44	4	21	12	2076

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