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26 JUL 1989

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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

PRIVATE OFFICE

From the Private Secretary

26 July 1989

Dear Stephen.

I enclose a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Kevin McNamara, M.P.

I should be grateful for your early advice and a draft reply, for the Prime Minister's signature, to reach this office by Monday, 31 July.

J 26/7

1/ Mr Pope

Yours sincerely,

2/ P.S./S.O.F.S (6)

P.S./Mr Bokunley (L-2)

Charles Powell

P.S./P.S (L-2)

P.S./Sir K. Bloomfield

CHARLES POWELL

Mr Burns

Mr Fell

Mr Blackwell

\* Mr George + Stephen Pope, Esq., Northern Ireland Office

Mr Wolstencroft

Mr Carrick

S.O.F.S to see.

- for draft reply by 1700 today -  
pl for S.O.F.S approval



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher PC MP  
10 Downing St  
London SW1  
24 July 1989

Dear Prime Minister,

It has come to my attention that your office has been involved in distorting the position of Her Majesty's Opposition with respect to the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill.

I enclose a copy of a letter from Mr Charles Powell to the Mayor of Boston, Mr Raymond Flynn, in which Mr Powell seeks to convey the impression that the Bill has the support of Her Majesty's Opposition.

If Mr Powell had attended the Report stage and 3rd reading debates on the Bill, or was aware of the discussions between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and myself, he would have realised that the Opposition's support for the Bill on 3rd reading was conditional on the promises made by the Government to drastically improve the Bill in the House of Lords.

Since the Government has not seen fit to do so, and, in some respects, has even weakened the Bill, the conditions have not been met. As a result, the Government can no longer count on the support of H.M. Opposition. I regret this, particularly since the Opposition has lent over backwards to secure agreement with the Government.

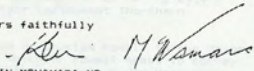
I would therefore request that you apologise to Mr Flynn for misleading him as to the Opposition's position on this issue. I would also expect you to apologise to the Labour Party and to myself for the misrepresentation of our views. I would also like you to give an undertaking that you will not claim to represent the position of HM Opposition to people within the UK or abroad without first checking with the relevant Opposition spokesperson.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
LONDON

I am sure that you realise that attempts to misinform US opinion are not conducive to attracting inward investment into Northern Ireland, something which the Opposition particularly wishes to encourage.

Finally, I must say that I do find it extraordinary that a civil servant such as Mr Powell should find himself compromised in such a fashion by an involvement in a party political matter.

Yours faithfully



KEVIN MCNAMARA MP

Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary

23 June 1987

Ministerial Secretary

Mayor

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 24 May and your good wishes, and has asked me to reply on her behalf. The Prime Minister welcomes your interest in the progress of the Fair Employment legislation for Northern Ireland and hopes that others in the United States will recognise the importance of the steps which are being taken to secure fair participation for both communities in employment in the Province.

As you may know, the Fair Employment Bill was supported by both the Opposition and the Social Democratic and Labour Party when it completed its passage in the House of Commons on 25 May. That support reflects the fact that the Government has responded flexibly and positively to constructive points put forward during consideration of the Bill. The Bill has been progressively refined to sharpen its thrust in many areas, including such important points as the definition of affirmative action, goals and timetables, monitoring, and the level of compensation for individuals who have been the victims of discrimination. These refinements add significantly to the existing strengths of a Bill which already places clear duties and obligations on all employers in the Province. Implementation of the Bill will be closely monitored by Government.

The speedy introduction and energetic progress of this incisive legislation honours the Prime Minister's personal commitment given in September 1987 to take the steps required to work for the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of real equality of opportunity for all the people of Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister therefore firmly rejects your assertion that Government in Northern Ireland accept continued employment discrimination from areas or that it has been responsible for disinvestment from areas of high unemployment. The Government continues to work hard to attract new investment and jobs into Northern Ireland, particularly to the areas of high unemployment. Indeed, considerable success has been achieved recently in attracting major new investment to the West Belfast area. A French firm, Montupet, for example has decided to set up an aluminium foundry at Durnmurty, to manufacture components for the car industry. This £90 million investment will generate over 1,000 jobs.

You refer in your letter to the possibility of significant portions of the services provided by the Royal Victoria Hospital in West Belfast transferring to East Belfast. You are mistaken on this point. The Eastern Health and Social Services Board, which is responsible for hospital services in the Belfast area, is currently considering some proposals to reduce the overlap of services between the three main teaching hospitals, the Royal Group of Hospitals, the Belfast City Hospital and the Mater Infirmorum Hospital. This may involve some modest shift of services between these sites, but no transfer to the Ulster Hospital in East Belfast is under consideration. The Royal Group of Hospitals is, and will remain, the major centre of medical excellence in the Province and is likely to see a number of developments in the years ahead. Two important capital schemes have recently been announced, a Regional Neonatal Referral Unit and expanded facilities for cardiac surgery. Further developments under consideration include the development of new laboratory facilities, the completion of the major upgrading scheme for the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and an extension to the School of Dentistry.

The Prime Minister shares your view that those who advocate and condone disinvestment in Northern Ireland are mistaken, and welcomes your personal commitment to encouraging more investment, to continued US Government contributions to the International Fund for Ireland and to helpful initiatives such as the Boston Ireland Ventures. It is through such positive steps that real and lasting progress can be made in Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister feels strongly that if this objective is to be achieved, we must work constructively together. The British and Irish Governments are doing so under the aegis of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, to which both Governments recently re-affirmed their commitment. The Prime Minister looks forward to your continued support for our endeavours and hopes that your efforts to attract new investment to the Province will be successful.

The staff in the local office of the Industrial Development Board and in the British Consulate-General in Boston would, I know, be only too pleased to work with you in elaborating any proposals you may have.

Yours sincerely  
Charles Powell

(CHARLES POWELL)

The Mayor of Boston