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NOTE

Visit of Harrison Goldin

I visited Northern Ireland on 10 June to discuss separately with Mr. Bob Cooper, Chairman Fair Employment Agency (FEA) and Mr. Terry Carlin, Secretary Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions the visit of the New York City Comptroller, Harrison Goldin. Both have agreed to meet Goldin, Cooper at a lunch being arranged by the Northern Ireland Office and Carlin at a time to be yet decided. They have both said they will not meet any Irish National Caucus representative accompanying Goldin.

Their difficulty with Goldin's proposals are centered on Goldin's support for the Mc Bride Principles, copies of which are in the brief. They have no difficulty with the spirit of the Mc Bride Principles which are designed to deal with the problem of existing discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland. They both commented unfavourably at the way in which the Irish National Caucus was associated with the launching and preparation of the Mc Bride Principles.

They both claim their problem arises from the fact that the Principles are based on the American Experience rather than that of Northern Ireland. It has not been uncommon in America to deal with current discrimination by the imposition of quotas. This is not the practice in Northern Ireland. To quote from a Guide to Manpower Policy Practice prepared by the Department of Economic Development in Northern Ireland in 1982 "Quota Systems, by which is meant systems which reserved specific proportions of places for persons of a given religious belief, are unlawful. Such systems are inherently discriminatory and contrary to the concept of equality of opportunity".

One American company, General Motors, which has manufacturing plants in both East and West Belfast, has sought legal advice about the Goldin proposals from Michael Lavery QC. Lavery is one of the most senior and highly respected Catholic barristers in Northern Ireland. He also happens to be Chairman of the Fair Employment Appeals Board. His advice is that any company in Northern Ireland adopting the Goldin proposals, (that is the Mc Bride Principles) would be in breach of the law. In Cooper's words a Protestant employee could successfully pursue a case against a company with the Fair Employment Agency, if that company accepted the Goldin proposals. (This information is secret).

In a letter sent to, among others, Goldin, last February Cooper said that some American Companies have made an enormous contribution towards securing equality of opportunity for Catholics, others less so. One of the longest established and largest American Companies in Northern Ireland, Du Pont, which is in the Derry area employs a labour force approx. 2/3 Catholic, 1/3 Protestant. Other American companies, such as Essex International, Heritage Crystal and the West Belfast factory of General Motors operate in areas that are mainly, if not exclusively Catholic.

Cooper's view is that an improvement in the situation can only come in the context of further foreign, and particularly American, investment. He fears that an American company considering setting up in Northern Ireland might well consider the Goldin proposals a further disincentive and might as a result locate elsewhere.

Carlin shared Cooper's concerns not only about the Goldin Proposals but about the Mc Bride Principles. He believed that the instigators of the Mc Bride Principles were members of the Irish National Caucus. Inez Mc Cormack who is Chairman of the Northern Ireland Committee and Senator John Robb were represented as supporting these Principles before either had given their consent and there was to say the least a sleight of

hand which left them both with the impression that one underlying but unstated purpose of the Principles was less a concern with encouraging employment and more a concern with hurting the protestants.

Cooper also raised with me the possibility that the FEA report monitoring recruitment patterns in Shorts for the period April-December 1984, which accuses Shorts of continuing discrimination, might become public during the course of Goldin's visit. A separate report, which is secret, is attached.

It is suggested therefore that caution be exercised in agreeing with the detail of the Goldin proposals while fully endorsing the sentiment and the spirit. We agree fully with the thinking behind the proposals and we understand the views of both Cooper and Carlin who fear that the proposals, in their fullness, would act as a further disincentive to American investment in Northern Ireland.

Daí

Daithi O'Ceallaigh

12 June, 1985

SECRET

In view of Mr. O'Ceallaigh's report of his conversation with Bob Cooper and the imminence of the publication of Cooper's report (it may be published before the end of the week), the emerging criticism of Shorts (see today's Irish Times) and the coincidence of the visit of Comptroller Goldin of New York City this weekend, I called the British Ambassador this morning and asked him to come to the Department. It would have been highly inconvenient for him to come in today (although he was willing to do so) and in the circumstances I agreed to see Mr. Stimpson.

I told Stimpson that controversy was already beginning to emerge about discriminatory recruitment practices at the existing East Belfast factory of Shorts and that this would be used by Goldin for controversial and perhaps possible damaging purposes in the US. I reminded him of the assistance we had given to Shorts to secure the US contract. I reminded him further of the specific efforts made by the Taoiseach in his recent visit to the US to discourage the application of the McBride principles and the possibility of US disinvestment in Northern Ireland. I said that the emergence of evidence of a revival of discrimination in Shorts would be damaging to the Taoiseach, the Minister and to friends of the Irish Government on Capitol Hill who had stuck their necks out against their own interests to help Shorts. I said it was deeply depressing that the old patterns were emerging - in the period just after the contract

had been secured. I said that as this controversy developed, we would certainly have little option but to raise the matter in a formal way with the British. (Note: in order to protect the information we had from Cooper, I had to make my remarks rather general).

I said that at this stage I was informally suggesting to him that in the interest of Anglo-Irish relations and in the separate interests of our two Governments it was extremely important that the British should be seen to be critical of any evidence of discrimination in Shorts and moreover, pushing strongly both for the avoidance of discrimination and the establishment of the West Belfast Project.

Stimpson expressed appreciation of our letting him know about this problem and concluded, "it's really up to us now, isn't it"? I agreed.

M J Lillis

11 June, 1985.

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Minister for Justice
Attorney General
Secretary
Mr Nally
Mr Ward
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