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1. Mr. Anderson 2/3/11
2. Mr. Longline.

John
2/10


CONFIDENTIAL

30 September 1991

Dear Sean

Joe Hayes and I had lunch on 25 September with Maurice Hayes and I am enclosing for information a note prepared by Joe on the main points that arose in our conversation.

Yours sincerely


Ambassador

Mr Sean O hUiginn
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

Enc

NOTE

A Conversation with Dr Maurice Hayes

25 September 1991

A. Local Government Boundary Review

1. He was annoyed with the personalised tone of Mary Holland's opinion piece in that days "Irish Times". He never doubted that whatever decisions he took he risked offending one group or another. Inevitably, public criticism was part of the job. When he took it on, however, he had hoped to avoid being drawn personally into any controversy. He had, for example, insisted on establishing a tier of carefully chosen assistant commissioners, to provide for a degree of collegiality and objectivity. He had also hoped that this would knock the perception that he alone decided on the proposals.
2. In the case of Moyle, it was, he said "emotional nonsense" to accuse him of trying to destroy the unique character of the Glens. He had three basic options with Moyle, abolish it, amalgamate it with Ballymoney or leave it as it was. In formulating his proposals he was obliged to take certain practical criteria into account. He had to consider the demographic base of each local authority within a minimum and maximum level. He had also to take account of each council's capacity to finance itself. He was also seeking insofar as possible to minimise the impact on the existing parliamentary constituency boundaries.
3. He did not have a closed mind on Moyle. All the proposals were preliminary. The process was a consultative one and the public enquiries would provide ample opportunity to hear and take account of the counter arguments. He had budgeted for upwards of fifteen hearings and it now looked as though he might have only six or so which he felt was not a bad outcome. He had four main areas of concern - Moyle, Poleglass, Waterside and Twinbrook, although he felt that in the case of Twinbrook, initial public dissatisfaction might not go much further and might be more for the record rather than reflecting any real sense of grievance with his proposals.

B. The GAA

3. He hoped we had noted Jeremy Hanley's presence at Croke Park for the football All Ireland. In his view this was a significant first and was only possible because of the make up of the current Down Co Board. It would never have happened if Armagh were in the Final and he doubted if the Antrim Board would have taken the initiative had they reached the Hurling Final. He recalled that for years Nick Scott had been frustrated in his attempts to attend Croke Park. Shortly after Down had reached the Final, he had suggested to the Chairman of the Down County Board that they get onto the NIO and invite a Minister. After some resistance at official level, it had gone all the way to the Secretary of State. It was to Peter Brooke's great credit that he had immediately recognised the possibilities and despatched Hanley.
4. Hanley had contacted Hayes and asked him to keep him company on the day. Hayes had not sat with Hanley for the game but he had been happy to introduce him to the various personalities in the VIP stand after the match. Hanley afterwards told him that during his time in Dublin in the 1970's teaching accountancy, he had attended a number of games at Croke Park.

C. The NIO Ministerial Team

5. He clearly has a lot of time for Peter Brooke. He emphasised the beneficial influence of Brooke's Irish connections on any politician with a keen historical sense. He has, however, little regard for Brian Mawhinney, with whom he has crossed swords on a number of occasions most recently when Mawhinney had chosen to endorse a statement by Trimble implicitly criticising Hayes. In the case of Trimble he remarked "it just goes to show that if you send a bigot to University all you get is an educated bigot." He refuses to believe that Peter Brooke prompted Mawhinney's elevation believing that it was due to his being known to Major - they have neighbouring constituencies - and to the fact that so soon after the unfortunate incident with the cellular phone Needham was unpromotable. Mawhinney was notoriously difficult to work with. He had a terribly inflated sense of his own importance and possessed all the wrong attributes for a successful NIO Minister. It was ironic that he should be seen in Westminster as the man who best knew the local scene. He liked Hanley but guessed that he had his eye on a mainland job. With a very thin majority in his London constituency the demands of the NIO job did not suit him greatly.

6. He has remained friendly with Chris Patten who stayed with him at his holiday home in France this summer. Patten's time at the NIO had a profound and lasting impact on him. He is not happy in his current job as chairman of the party. He does not believe himself to be temperamentally suited to it. Politically, it is a poisoned chalice since the chairman will have to carry the can for the outcome of the next election. Patten has his own political problems with the electors of Bath where he holds off a strong Lib Dem challenge by the narrowest of margins. His prospects of holding the seat have not been helped by the deep resentment in the city with the impact of the Governments business rate on the small shopkeepers. Patten is pessimistic about his chances, believing that his best hope will be a strong Labour showing which would eat into the Lib Dem vote. On the timing of the next election, Patten as is publicly known, firmly believes that the Government have no other realistic option but to wait until the Spring thereby capitalising on the expected economic up turn.