



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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British - Irish Association, Cambridge, 6 - 8 September, 1991

Some Main Points of Interest.

cc PSS  
Mr Brogan  
Mr Drayton  
Ambassador  
Bonde  
Counsellor M

1. Peter Brooke

He confirmed to me that he would not attempt to recommence the talks process until the question of an autumn election was resolved. He felt the talks had contributed to greater economic confidence in the North, which had not followed the recessionary path. A Foreign Office official, Graham Archer, said that the politicians would find it difficult not to engage in talks, if the election were not till next Summer. Addressing the Conference, Brooke rejected the notion he should put forward his own blueprint, unless the political parties invited the Government to make suggestions. He said it was unrealistic to expect the Irish Government to reconsider Articles 2 and 3, without knowing the future shape of the Government of Northern Ireland and the arrangements for the conduct of North-South relations. He retreated a little when this view was challenged by Chris McGimpsey, and said while a spontaneous move would be constructive, otherwise Acts 2 and 3 would be on the agenda for talks. Ken Bloomfield former head of the Civil Service expressed open scepticism about a grand settlement, and claimed there was room for confidence -inspiring gestures. There was some debate on whether a unilateral referendum was a good idea, Michael McDowell favouring it and challenging the AG John Murray, others like Ruairi Quinn T.D., Micheal Martin, T.D., and Maurice Hayes, the Local Government Boundary Commissioner taking the view it was politically impracticable or that it would create a big opening for Sinn Fein. Brooke said he had never felt under moral blackmail from the security forces to adopt particular measures, but he complained about Civil Service compartmentalisation and being presented too often with recommendations agreed at official level without the opportunity to explore more fully the options. Peter Brooke told me he wanted, if possible, to go to Tipperary to collect his Peace Prize.

2. Kevin McNamara

He told me Labour would be going all out for the Irish vote in the Election (especially the more recent immigrants). They were flexible on electoral reform, if they needed Liberal Democrat support to form a Government (he thought the Tories were too). One of their first steps would be to send back prisoners to NI. It was essential that the part-time element in the UDR in its new guise be phased out. We also discussed the question of whether the IRA would continue their campaign under a reformist Labour Government, alienating the few Labour friends they still had. His advisor Brendan O'Leary hoped the Irish Government would not show their negotiating hand prior to an election.

3. Northern Political Views

Chris McGimpsey, the Unionist Hon. Secretary, told me he thought the N. Belfast seat of Cecil Walker at slight risk from SF since the Oldpark by-election, Robinson's seat in E. Belfast was also winnable, (if the OUP could get a good candidate), and Kilfedder's seat in N. Down. A Nationalist could win McCrea's seat in mid-Ulster. He felt Ken Maginnis was fairly safe. The OUP had been very disappointed at the dominant role played by Rev. William McCrea of the DUP in the talks compared with Robinson.

Brian Feeney told me he felt the debate in SF would come to a head in the next 1-2 years, and that the Adams faction would win out, but he feared at the cost of a bloody split. The WP had been without funds for a year, until a deal was done at this year's Ard-Fheis, whereby it retained its description as 'a revolutionary socialist party'.

4. Direct Rule v Devolution

Ken Bloomfield expressed the view that Northerners were schizophrenic about integration/special treatment. But he felt over time direct rule would lead to greater and greater convergence. Without a subordinate legislature, there was not parliamentary time for a full legislative procedure for NI at Westminster (hence orders in council with short debates and no amendments). Frank Millar accepted direct rule was benign and generous, but not democratic, and its existence for 20 years was a standing indictment of everyone. It was becoming dangerously institutionalized. He described integrationism as a sectarian cop-out, a way of avoiding having Catholics in Government. Yet political leaders stood between NI and the abyss; there had to be a belief in a democratic resolution. Michael McDowell was inclined to openly dismiss a resumption of the Brooke talks as a waste of time. Brooke admitted that he and his Ministers were not the best persons to handle the North's agricultural interests vis a vis John Gummer and the EC.

5. Economic Issues \*

Interconnector Richard Needham, Minister of State at NIO, said with a fall in electricity prices next year, prices North and South would become uncompetitive, and that it was vital to restore the North-South interconnector. He told me there was now strong political will on the Northern side, and the Provisionals must be confronted. It would cost £3m to restore (or if unavoidable £30m under Carlingford Lough), and it would be worth 300 MW to the ESB. John Simpson, the economist, told me an electricity interconnector between the North and Scotland would be announced later this Autumn. With privatisation the Scottish Board now wanted to export electricity.

\* I attended the Economic sub-Group.

Incinerator Needham expressed exasperation at Du Pont's clumsy announcement that it was seeking a £5m grant from the IDA. He said he and Minister Flynn should get together, and establish a sub-group of officials to monitor the situation closely. Three-quarters of toxic waste was being buried or disposed of at the moment in Ireland in unaccounted for ways, which was far worse environmentally.

Economic Co-operation Needham again made a plea that a permanent economic sub-structure of the Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference be established, so that there could be continuous discussion of economic matters, that would not be overshadowed by political developments or security crises. (It is clear that Needham's stock has risen in the North, just as Mawhinney's has fallen - David Fell, the new head of the Civil Service, was openly critical of the latter in private).

#### Northern Ireland Air Service

Hugh O'Neill, Chairman of Aldergrove Airport and of the NI Tourist Board, said a number of Short's commuter planes had been returned from N. America, and that he was trying (he claims to have the backing of Tony Ryan) to start an air service from Belfast to Cork, Galway, Sligo, with perhaps in certain circumstances onward flight to Glasgow e.g. Cork-Belfast-Sligo, or a circular service round the island. He expressed a desire to meet the Taoiseach and talk to him about this. He was inclined to complain about lack of co-operation from middle management in Bord Fáilte.

#### The state of the economy

It was claimed by George Quigley, Chairman of the Ulster Bank, that both parts of Ireland had escaped recession (According to today's paper, the Ulster Bank's chief economist does not agree!). There was growing interest in the North at the South's social partnership experiment (Needham told me he was beginning to establish informal mechanisms). It was also claimed Northern Ireland had benefited from the Republic's recent economic performance. Needham said that the twelve councils were now co-operating on a cross-community basis, and he expected Belfast would do so soon. Graham Gudgin, Director of NI Economic Research Centre, claimed the reason NI had escaped the recession was the large public sector, very small mortgages, and good industrial performance, but unemployment would stay above 100,000 for the foreseeable future. The only hope was to educate people so that they could get jobs elsewhere. Growth of around 5% was needed North and South to make much impact on unemployment. It was claimed that only 27% of Southerners had ever travelled to NI, so there was a lot of potential. Needham felt privatisation of Harland's and Short's had been great successes. Short's were taking their apprentice training to the city centre, more neutral ground.



Needham said he wanted more investment from the South, following the example of Goodman, Jury's and Bewley's. Needham quoted a joint CII-CBI study that post-1992 with barriers down 75,000 jobs could be created through cross-border trade and collaboration, though others such as Gudgin were highly sceptical. It was agreed co-operation in selling to larger outside markets was even more important than cross-border trade. There was much debate as to whether SF should be involved in economic projects/community enterprise (with Brian Feeney and the NIO strongly opposed). Quigley claimed there had been remarkable progress in North-South business contacts over the last two to three years. Mark Durkan of the SDLP was critical of the INTERREG programme, and the lack of response to local councils. I explained investment plans for the road from Dublin to the border, the situation with regard to the Dublin-Belfast railway, and other progress in North-South economic co-operation.

6. Security

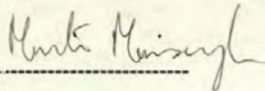
There were strong opinions expressed in plenary session that the British Government should pay more attention to the views of bodies like the Standing Advisory Commissioner of Human Rights in relation to such issues as the video-recording of interrogations, the replacement in cases of complaints against the police of the requirement of 'beyond reasonable doubt' by 'balance of probability', the use of lethal force (manslaughter not admissible finding), and the derogation from the European convention on Human Rights in relation to the length of detention without charge. In the security group there was apparently a half hour debate on internment with fairly negative conclusions. It was suggested that at the Chief Constable's comment about it 'being some way down the road' was an incitement to the IRA. Brigadier Jackson of the Belfast Brigade felt privately that a major atrocity would happen again sooner or later (narrow miss last week, when a tractor stuck in a field). The Attorney General, John Murray, pointed out that special laws required special safeguards. He paid tribute to the Northern judiciary, which was greatly appreciated, and he and the British AG <sup>Peter</sup>Christopher Mayhew exchanged fulsome compliments.

7. Hadden and Boyle

These two lawyers, who wrote on influential a book just prior to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, are writing a new one about NI's place in Europe, toying with the idea of proposing that it should become a direct dependency of the EC, (outside the UK), as might Gibraltar, without full sovereignty.

General

The Government was represented by the Minister for Health, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon, T.D., and the Attorney General, Mr. John Murray SC, Micheal Martin, T.D., Jim O'Keeffe, T.D., Ruairi Quinn, T.D., and Michael McDowell represented the other parties. Brian Feeney and Mark Durkan were present for the SDLP, and Chris McGimpsey and Reg Empey for the OUP, and Seamus Close for alliance. Peter Brooke, Richard Needham, and Sir Christopher. Mayhew represented the British Government, Ken McNamara Labour and there was a Liberal Democrat peer. Much of the work was done in four groups, the rule of law, economics, education, and health and social services.

  
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9 September, 1991