

RESTRICTED

FROM: C G MACCABE
POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
11 February 1993

*in hand
M. consider the point
at 4.45
12.2*

cc Mr Watkins - B
Mr Williams - B
Ms Lodge - B
Mr Archer, RID - B

ASST SEC 15 FEB 1993
CENT SEC

*Risk. ST7/2
Rosenberg
D. Speck
17/2*

Mr T Gallaher
British Embassy, Dublin - B

VISITS BY TDs AND OTHERS TO NORTHERN IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND
POLITICAL FIGURES TO THE REPUBLIC

David Watkins passed me a copy of your minute of 4 February in which you asked, inter alia, for any ideas I might have for increasing the number of influential visitors from Northern Ireland to the Republic.

2. Although I have no difficulty with the principle of increasing mutual understanding in this way, the practicalities of such a strategy give me some cause for concern. Before I could feel happy nominating or encouraging someone to go South, I would want to be sure that the visit was set in a satisfactory framework. This may be provided by a seminar or conference (for example, the Encounter Round Table at Kilkea Castle next November), or a programme of briefings and meetings arranged by the Embassy or some other responsible sponsor. Even then, however, careful selection of the visitors would be necessary to ensure the maximum return for all concerned. As you will know, we do not suffer an embarrassment of riches on the local political scene and those first and second rank politicians that make good ambassadors are already in demand both here and further afield.

3. I realise this is not a very helpful response. I hope Mr Watkins can do better by concentrating, as I expect he will, on specific areas of interest such as business and commerce, health and education. Perhaps the best way to proceed in regard to PAB's "clients" is for you to come back to me when you have identified an event or events where Northern political representation would be desirable. I will then try to come up with some names and perhaps, where I think it would not be counter-productive, give those selected a nudge in the right direction.

[signed]

C G MACCABE
SH EXT 2238

R E S T R I C T E D

From: T Gallagher
British Embassy, Dublin

Date: 4 February 1993

cc: Ms B Lodge, SIL
Mr M Williams - B
Mr Archer, RID, FCO

Mr David Watkins
Central Secretariat

VISITS BY TDS AND OTHERS TO NORTHERN IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL FIGURES TO THE REPUBLIC

1. As you may be aware, we have been trying for some time to arrange a series of visits to Northern Ireland by small all-party groups of TDs, with a view to helping improve their knowledge of Northern Ireland and their contacts there. Our initial approaches to individual TDs elicited a rather disappointing response and we then decided to try to enlist the support of the Irish Co-Chairman of the BIIPB, Jim Tunney. He was fairly positive about the idea and promised to raise it within the Irish side; unfortunately, the General Election intervened and Tunney lost his seat.

2. We propose to return to the charge when a new Irish Co-Chairman is appointed - in a month or so. In the meantime, however, we have been wondering whether we need to limit ourselves so explicitly to TDs, and whether influential figures who would benefit from visits might in any case be more likely to accept help from us for visits to Northern Ireland if they were tied to specific events - educational, cultural, commercial, agricultural or whatever - in their individual area of interest. This would make them less beholden to HMG, and make these visits more normal and straightforward (and frequent), which is what we want them to become. I should be grateful, therefore, if you could let us have any details of forthcoming events in Northern Ireland that may be available so that we can target particular individuals straight away instead of laboriously trying to assemble a formal group of TDs via the BIIPB.

3. We also see every advantage in increasing the number of potentially influential visitors down here from Northern Ireland. Given the desirability of tackling the considerable ignorance of Northern Ireland matters here, we believe that we should be trying to encourage a range of visitors, at all levels and in a wide variety of fields. We will look for specific opportunities here: but any ideas you (or Chris Maccabe) may have will be eagerly received.

Mr Watkins

From the most recent *Learning Events* (Signed)
circular I would suggest the following
possibilities:

LMW.7978

25 March
late March

branch of Opportunity 2000
branch of EC Relay Centre for NI

R E S T R I C T E D

late April

PS. I agree with your view on Y.

branch of Business in the Environment Campaign by Business in the Community

8/2

229/2

ASST
SEC - 4 FEB 1993

CENT

SEC

- 4 FEB 1993

1. cc Mrs Maccabe MAB

2. Mrs Maccabe

Grateful for ideas. 'Learning Events' might be helpful for it. I have doubts about the wisdom + feasibility

7 X.

8/2

4/2

Noted 1/2.

Rosemary

Could I get have a copy of forthcoming events from Registry?

8/2

he has not agreed. C.D. cannot give me a definite reply. H.

8/2