

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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**Title:** Letter from Reverend Francis Park, Secretary to Cardinal William Conway, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, to D. O'Sullivan, Secretary of the Department of the Taoiseach and Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, enclosing a typescript copy of a letter sent by Cardinal Conway to Taoiseach Jack Lynch, TD, expressing surprise and disappointment on reading newspaper reports of remarks by the Taoiseach supporting statements by Basil Mclvor, Northern Ireland Minister for Education, on the subject of provision of 'mixed schools' catering for children of different religious denominations.

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6th May, 1974.

Confidential

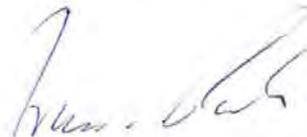
Dear Mr. O'Sullivan,

The Cardinal has asked me to forward to you, for the information of the Taoiseach, the enclosed copy of a letter which has been posted today to Mr. Jack Lynch, T.D.

*Francis Park*

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,



Francis Park (Rev.)

Secretary to Cardinal Conway

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Mr. D. O'Sullivan,  
Private Secretary to the Taoiseach,  
Department of the Taoiseach,  
DUBLIN, 2.

ARMAGH,

5th May, 1974.

Dear Mr. Lynch,

With very great regret I feel I must write to say how surprised and disappointed I was to read the press reports of your remarks in Blessington on the subject of Mr. McIvor's proposals for "mixed schools" in Northern Ireland.

These proposals obviously constitute a matter of great seriousness and delicacy. Equally obviously - as I have already publicly stated - we shall examine the proposals very carefully.

That you should at this stage speak in a way which inevitably will be interpreted - and already has been interpreted in today's headlines - as "backing" Mr. McIvor's proposals, quite frankly surprised me. Narrowly construed your remarks may not seem to say very much but you know as well as I do how they will be read. I have just come from a Confirmation function in County Louth where the priests - some of whom I know to be strong supporters of Fianna Fail - were expressing astonishment that you should have spoken in the way you did on a matter of this kind.

In point of fact Mr. McIvor's detailed suggestions go very much further than his original statement and have very serious implications. Our discussions with his Department are going to be made immensely more difficult by a chorus of approval behind him. You may recall that when you were in office I expressed anxiety at

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the weakening effect which the policies then being pursued in the Republic would have on Catholic schools - and ultimately on the country. That process has now been given added momentum in the other part of our country.

Believe me the writing of this letter has been all the more painful for me in that it is addressed to one for whom I have always had the highest respect and esteem.

Yours sincerely,

Archbishop of Armagh

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Mr. J. Lynch, T.D.,  
21 Garville Avenue,  
Rathgar, DUBLIN, 6.