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Reference Code: 2001/43/1406

Title: Letter from C. Howard, First Secretary,
Embassy of Ireland to Great Britain, to the
Secretary of the Department of External Affairs
regarding funding for media events in London
and the re-organisation of the Stormont
Information Services.

Creation Date(s): 2 February, 1970

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 1 page

Creator(s): Department of Foreign Affairs

Access Conditions: Open

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AMBASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

1) Mr B. Gallagher B.S. 20 sept.
 2) Mr. H. ... S.W.I. 146
 TELEPHONE: BELGRAVIA 2312/70

Mr O'Riordan

6/2/70

February 2nd 1970

Secretary
 Department of External Affairs

With reference to Mr. Brooke's appointment in charge of Information activities in the Stormont Government, it is worth noting that Mr. Tommy Roberts, the Stormont Press Officer in London, is being recalled, on promotion, as Deputy Head of Information Services in the North.

Mr. Roberts was an extremely able and successful Press Officer. His performance in getting so many important newsmen to come down time and time again to meet various visiting Stormont personalities, some of whom were not of any great eminence, was quite remarkable.

Some people thought that Mr. Roberts promotion might have political implications since his job in London might well be considered to be more important than the one to which he is being promoted. He was very close to Capt. O'Neill and, therefore, might not be considered to be "in" with the Right Wing Unionists.

On the other hand, it may be that, in a tight situation, the Stormont people might consider Mr. Roberts's talents might be better implied in Belfast since America is, too, so important to them. He could also maintain his contacts by frequent visits to London. His undoubted popularity in Press circles here would help him to do an enormous amount of work during such visits. His promotion then, assuming it is real, means that he is virtual Head of the day to day ^{information} activities of Stormont.

I should add that, at the moment, the Ulster Office is lavishing hospitality and propaganda on the communications media here. I was visited two days ago by a free-lance journalist who has been invited to two receptions in the Ulster Office in the last month (this man does the odd political piece from time to time for the Evening Standard and Telegraph).

In contra distinction, I now have not a "red half-penny" to spend on the cultivation of the Press. I have far and away exceeded my annual allowance on Press entertainment because of the need to do so owing to the situation in the North.

Something ought to be done about this even on a temporary basis until the matter can be fixed on a long-term basis.

The lack of secretarial assistance is also impeding my contacts and work with the communications media.

(G Howard)