

NATIONAL ARCHIVES**IRELAND**

Reference Code: 2004/21/465

Title: Copy letter by Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain D O'Sullivan to HJ McCann, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, reporting a conversation with Lord Windlesham [David Hennessy, 3rd Baron Windlesham] of the Northern Ireland Office, mainly regarding the efforts of Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw to persuade unionist opinion in favour of the Green Paper on Northern Ireland.

Creation Date(s): 10 January, 1973

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 3 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

17 Grosvenor Place
SWIX 7HR

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

10th January 1973

Dear Secretary

I met Lord Windlesham at a Fanfare for Europe function last evening. He brought up the question of ^{the} ~~a~~ talk which Bob McDonagh and I had here on New Year's Day. I told him in quite specific terms that we were both disappointed ^{at} ~~in~~ the negative attitude we encountered on the Council of Ireland idea. Indeed, the interview given recently by Mr Whitelaw to Brendan Malin of the Boston Globe, as reported in the Sunday Press on 7th January seemed to suggest that the hopes inspired by the Green Paper could well be disappointed. If effective expression is not given to the ideas in that document I could not see my Government giving its support and goodwill to the solution. It was, I said, important to bear fully in mind that without our support and goodwill the solution could not work.

Lord Windlesham said he was disappointed to hear what I had to say to him. He would report immediately to Mr Whitelaw on our conversation and I indicated that I would welcome a very early talk with the Secretary of State.

Lord Windlesham readily accepted that our support for the solution will be most important and he added "we will have to make a special effort to meet your wishes".

He then talked about the hardening attitudes on the majority side in the North. Mr Whitelaw's discussions with the people there are still continuing and may well go on

- 2 -

for a few weeks yet. There is no indication of any give on the part of the hardliners. In fact some of those of more moderate attitude would have been prepared some weeks ago to contemplate a change to P.R. in the General Election for the New Assembly. They have, however, now changed their minds and are strongly opposed.

One of the things on which Mr Whitelaw is particularly concentrating is an effort to rally as many as possible of the middle of the road Unionists behind him. Sir Robert Porter is being particularly helpful and there is some hope that it may be possible to get him back again into the political field. Another person on whom Mr Whitelaw is placing a good deal of reliance is Roy Bradford even though Lord Windlesham confessed to some personal doubts as to how far Bradford has undergone a real conversion. What is important however in relation to Bradford is that he dearly wants to have a prominent place in the new set-up and the British may want to give him strong backing.

I repeated several times to Lord Windlesham that it would be a ghastly mistake on their part to come forward with a half-hearted solution because of fear of a reaction from the hardline Protestant element. Apart from the fact that we could not, I believe, possibly give support to such a solution it was most unlikely that the minority side in the North would even accept it. Lord Windlesham said that this is a point which they have very much in mind. Gerry Pitt he said is the type of person who might be persuaded to go along with a weak solution but Paddy Devlin would certainly not. It would, he said, probably be a great help to the future of politics in Northern Ireland if Austin Currie and John Hume could be persuaded

- 3 -

to opt out of the SDLP and to join the Alliance Party. He doubted, however, if there is much hope for such a move but, in any event, Mr Whitelaw will be seeing John Hume for a detailed talk in the very near future.

Yours sincerely

DONAL O'SULLIVAN

Ambassador

Hugh J McCann Esq.
Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs