

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT 3.45 P.M. ON  
TUESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY, 1981.

Present: Prime Minister  
The Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell, MBE, MP.  
Ian Gow.

1. Mr. Powell started off by thanking the Prime Minister for having agreed to see him. The Prime Minister said that, of course, she would always see Mr. Powell.

2. Mr. Powell said that there were three headings under which he wished to group what he had to say:-

(a) Would you be surprised to hear?

- (i) That the Northern Ireland Office took the view that the Government was inhibited from making changes in Northern Ireland - notably reform of local government - by undertakings given by the previous Government to the Government of the Republic.
- (ii) That within the Northern Ireland Office it was a matter of comment that the Foreign Office had been criticised by Mr. Powell, whereas the Northern Ireland Office had not.
- (iii) That the brief for the Prime Minister in connection with her forthcoming visit to Washington about the supply of weapons by the United States to the R.U.C. had been agreed in advance with the President's advisers, and that the recommendation was that the Prime Minister ought not to press this point too hard.
- (iv) That the preparations for the meeting with the Irish Prime Minister in Dublin on 8th December, 1980 had been conducted with the knowledge of and agreed with the United States Government.
- (v) That the Northern Ireland Office made no secret of its hope that the Local Elections in Northern Ireland in May, 1981 would provide a triumph for Dr. Paisley and the Democratic Unionist Party.

(b) Inter-Governmental Relationships.

- (i) Mr. Powell said that following the murder of Lord Mountbatten, the murder of the soldiers at Warren Point, and the visit of the Pope to the Republic, there had been a meeting of Ministers

in Dublin at which the British and Irish Governments were represented. The result of that meeting had been kept secret. The British Ministers had sought and obtained assurances from the Irish Government about increased co-operation in defeating terrorism. The British Ministers were well satisfied with those assurances, but there was a quid pro quo from us. That quid pro quo and those assurances ~~caused~~ <sup>cost</sup> Mr. Lynch the Premiership and could not be disclosed. The deal was also fatal to Fitt. The quid pro quo was the recognition by us of the interests and aspirations of the Republic in Northern Ireland. Security ~~did~~ improve but was followed by the inexplicable decision to continue with the inter-party talks in Northern Ireland. Those talks should have been ~~abundant~~ <sup>abundant</sup> in April/May 1980, but went on. The Assembly and an election to that Assembly was proposed by the British Government.

- (ii) At the same time, preparations began for the hunger strike, which was timed to start 55 days before Christmas.
- (iii) We witnessed the rise and fall of the idea of having an Assembly and elections to it.
- (iv) The Northern Ireland Office was satisfied with the help which it received from many quarters, including Dublin.
- (v) Then followed the meeting in Dublin on 8th December, 1980. That meeting caused a great deal of unease - it was bound to do so. It caused unease to Mr. Powell.
- (vi) In the last week or two, another proposed hunger strike was being wheeled on again, with the proposal that it should reach its climax in the Spring (Easter) when the second phase of the talks initiated in Dublin would be taking place. "The pieces in the cards which I have built do fit together very tightly".
- (vii) "The ability of the Irish Government effectively to bring about the defeat of the I.R.A. is exaggerated ~~at~~ <sup>on</sup> our side. It is not possible for the Irish Government voluntarily to co-operate with us in the defeat of terrorism. The improved co-operation in security matters is enforced on the Republic Government by concessions from us. Friendly give and take is not on and we can only secure this extra co-operation by paying to the Irish Government a price which is greater than that co-operation is worth."
- (ix) This miscalculation has affected British policy for the past two years. We are in a ratchet position. The cards in the hand of the Irish Government are the Maze, the I.R.A. and the Border.

/ix. Mr. Powell

(ix) Mr. Powell then referred to the Stronge murders, which, he said, had characteristics wholly different from other murders in Northern Ireland. Mr. Powell believed (though he had no specific evidence for this belief) that these murders might have been planned and carried out by persons other than members of the I.R.A.

(c) Dr. Paisley.

(i) Mr. Powell said that our Whips Office seemed to have close relations with Dr. Paisley and with the two other Members of the Democratic Unionist Party. The impression was given, on both sides of the water, that the Conservative Party was countenancing the D.U.P. at the expense of the Official Unionists and that the Northern Ireland Office had its eye on Dr. Paisley as a possible future Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.

(ii) In <sup>that</sup> connection, Mr. Powell said that in January, 1980 Mr. John Taylor had moved his family to Brussels, but that in May his family had returned to Northern Ireland. In July, 1980 Mrs. John Taylor had said to Mr. Powell that it had been indicated to her husband that Dr. Paisley was the first choice of the Northern Ireland Office as Prime Minister.

(iii) Mr. Powell said that his Party had always supported the Government of the day in upholding the rule of law in Northern Ireland - notably during the strike called by Dr. Paisley in 1977, when support for the Government had been given at considerable risk to the Official Unionist Party.

(iv) Mr. Powell said that he hoped that there could be more relaxed relationships between our Whips Office and the Official Unionists.

3. Mr. Powell said that the information which he had given as set out in paragraph 2(a) above had been obtained from a reliable source within the Northern Ireland Office and should, therefore, be treated as being given in the utmost confidence.

4. The Prime Minister thanked Mr. Powell for what he had said, but made no comment.

5. The Prime Minister then said that there was just one matter which she wanted to mention to him. Mr. Molyneux had written to the Prime Minister asking whether, in the talks now taking place between the British and Irish Governments, the question of the claim by the Republic to the territory of Northern Ireland could be included. The Prime Minister said that she had, all along, made it clear that only institutional and not constitutional matters were to be discussed. The claim by the Irish Government to the territory of Northern Ireland was

/undoubtedly

undoubtedly a constitutional matter. If the Prime Minister was to seek to raise that constitutional issue with the Irish Government, it would then seek to raise the constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, and that was something which the Prime Minister would never agree to discuss.

6. Mr. Powell said that he understood the Prime Minister's reason for not including Article 2 of the Irish Constitution in the talks. He went on to say that he saw the matter differently. He said that if he was contemplating lending his lawn mower to his next door neighbour, when the next door neighbour was claiming that the lawn mower was his, and not Mr. Powell's, he, Mr. Powell, would find it difficult to continue discussions as to whether he, Mr. Powell, should lend the lawn mower to his neighbour.

7. Finally, Mr. Powell said that the sinking of the merchant ship "Nellie M" had raised the whole question of the delineation of the international frontier in the Foyle Estuary and in Carlingford Lough. Mr. Powell said that he hoped that this matter would be included in the current talks.