

Prime Minister

VOTING RIGHTS FOR UNITED KINGDOM CITIZENS RESIDENT IN THE
REPUBLIC - IRISH GENERAL ELECTIONS

1. In the telegram from the Foreign Secretary reporting on the meeting between Douglas Hurd and the Irish ambassador on 26th July, it was reported that the Irish ambassador had said that:

"Consideration should be given to speeding up the introduction of Irish legislation enabling UK citizens resident in the Republic to vote in elections to the Dail in order to counter the strong public pressure here in favour of removing similar rights enjoyed by Irish citizens in the UK."

2. I remind you that the General Communique issued following your meeting with Dr Garrett Fitzgerald on 6th November 1981 contained the following paragraph:-

"The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach noted that each country afforded the other's citizens most of the rights and privileges available to its own. The Taoiseach indicated that the arrangements for the grant of voting rights at parliamentary elections to British citizens resident in the Republic were well advanced and that he hoped to have the necessary legislation introduced soon."

3. The Report of the Anglo-Irish General Studies (annexed to the Communique dated 6th November) contained the following sentence:-

.../...

"Officials noted the decisions of the Irish authorities to extend voting rights in national Elections to resident British Citizens."

4. This note is prompted by the fact that, on the telegram referred to in paragraph (1) of this note, you had, most appositely, written:

"We do not want the Irish Government to give the vote to British citizens there. They are pitifully few and it would not be a quid pro quo for the vote of the millions who reside here."

5. There is increasing pressure within the Parliamentary Party to deprive Irish citizens living here of the vote and during Question and Answer Sessions for Home Office Ministers at the Party Conference, this is certain to be raised most forcefully. There are 35 resolutions on the Conference Agenda calling for the withholding of the vote for Irish citizens living here. These resolutions were all submitted before the July bomb outrages in London.
6. We believe that a large majority of Irish citizens in the United Kingdom who do vote, do not vote for Conservative candidates.
7. Logic, commonsense and Party advantage combine to make this change in the law desirable; though I fear that the Foreign Office will oppose such a change not least because of the Communique issued on 6th November 1981 after the London Summit.

W.C.
Always been → George
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PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS: 27 JULY

LINE TO TAKE

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

1. Present state of relations

Relations with the Republic have suffered in recent weeks because of Irish Government's behaviour during the Falklands crisis and their unhelpful attitude to Northern Ireland devolution initiative.

2. Commitment to consult Irish Government on Northern Ireland

No commitment exists for HMG to consult the Irish Government on matters affecting Northern Ireland. We have made this clear to the Irish Government, most recently when My Right Hon. friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met the Irish Ambassador yesterday.

3. Constitutional future of Northern Ireland

Constitutional future of Northern Ireland is a matter for the people of Northern Ireland, the Government and this Parliament.

~~to wish~~

LINE TO TAKE

Removal of Irish Voting Rights

1. No plans to do this. Issues of this kind go very wide and should be considered on their merits. The vast majority of Irish citizens living in this country are peaceful and law abiding people. Instead of penalising them we must concentrate our efforts on the tiny minority involved in terrorism.

BACKGROUND NOTE

Anglo-Irish Relations

1. There has been a steady deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations ever since Mr Haughey's government returned to power. Matters were brought to a head by the Irish Government's behaviour during the Falklands crisis: but even if the crisis had not taken place their curt dismissal of Mr Prior's devolution proposals would have led to a cooling of relations.
2. Irish sensitivity about the state of relations is at present acute. They have tried to put down the present deterioration to a combination of an inability on the UK's part to understand the constraints imposed on them by their neutrality over the Falklands and to inadequate consultation over the devolution proposals.
3. In speeches during an adjournment debate in the Dail on 15 and 16 June the Irish Foreign Minister and Mr Haughey made speeches strongly critical of HMG.
4. The main points were that:
 - i. HMG had failed to consult the Irish Government on the Northern Ireland proposals, and that the initiative was therefore bound to fail;
 - ii. in failing to consult in this way, HMG had gone back on commitments made at the November 1981 Summit.
5. No commitment exists to consult the Irish about the constitutional future of Northern Ireland. But we have been assiduous in keeping them informed of the progress of our ideas.
6. Mr Hurd summoned the Irish Ambassador yesterday to express concern at the criticisms contained in Mr Collins' and Mr Haughey's speeches. He underlined that it was wrong and profoundly unhelpful to imply that HMG had entered into any commitment to consult the Irish Government about the constitutional future of Northern Ireland and that the current constitutional proposals fully safeguarded the position of the minority in the Province. The Irish Ambassador took careful note.

Mr. Gow

PS TO PM, NO 10 DOWNING STREET,

*We don't want
to wish
the vote to go to
them. They are
few and it would
be a million
of the million who
will be
not
not*

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GRS 455

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DESKBY 270830Z
FM FCO 261843Z JUL 82
TO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN
TELEGRAM NUMBER 87 OF 26 JULY
INFO ROUTINE NIO BELFAST

YOUR TEL NO 208: ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

1. MR HURD SUMMONED THE IRISH AMBASSADOR TODAY (26 JULY) TO EXPRESS CONCERN AT THE CRITICISMS MADE BY MR COLLINS AND THE TAOISEACH IN THE DAIL ON 15-16 JULY (YOUR TELS NOS 197 AND 201). HE UNDERLINED THAT IT WAS WRONG AND PROFOUNDLY UNHELPFUL TO IMPLY THAT HMG HAD ENTERED INTO ANY COMMITMENT TO CONSULT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND THAT THE CURRENT CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS FULLY SAFEGUARDED THE POSITION OF THE MINORITY IN THE PROVINCE. CLOSER ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS REMAINED IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES AND HE HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DRAW A LINE UNDER THE PRESENT SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. IN PARTICULAR HE HOPED THAT ANY FUTURE STATEMENTS BY THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE CAREFULLY MEASURED.
2. DR KENNEDY TOOK CAREFUL NOTE. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD BE RETURNING TO DUBLIN ON 28 JULY AND WOULD BE SEEING MR COLLINS AND THE TAOISEACH. MR COLLINS' SPEECH SHOULD BE READ IN FULL. IT HAD BEEN INTENDED TO CLARIFY THE IRISH POSITION, IN PARTICULAR OVER THE DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS. RATHER THAN ATTACK HMG. KENNEDY THEN REHEARSED IRISH MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE DEVOLUTION INITIATIVE ON FAMILIAR LINES: A POINT OF PARTICULAR CONCERN WAS THAT THE DISQUALIFICATION OF SEAMUS MALLON FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS COULD EASILY PROVIDE A PRETEXT FOR THE SDLP TO BOYCOTT THE ELECTIONS. BUT LATER IN THE CONVERSATION HE ADMITTED THAT HE TOO HAD BEEN WORRIED BY MR COLLINS' SPEECH.
3. KENNEDY SAID THAT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO TRY TO FIND SOME WAY

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OF IMPROVING RELATIONS. HE AGREED THAT A PAUSE WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE ANY MAJOR INITIATIVES COULD BE TAKEN BUT HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS AFTER THE SUMMER BREAK.

HE WOULD BE PUTTING THE FOLLOWING IDEAS TO HIS MINISTERS ON A PERSONAL BASIS LATER THIS WEEK:

(A) WHILE A MEETING BETWEEN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY OUT OF THE QUESTION BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO INTENSIFYING OFFICIAL LEVEL CONTACTS ON ISSUES SUCH AS ECONOMIC COOPERATION. ENERGY. TOURISM AND AGRICULTURE:

(B) CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO SPEEDING UP THE INTRODUCTION OF IRISH LEGISLATION ENABLING UK CITIZENS RESIDENT IN THE REPUBLIC TO VOTE IN ELECTIONS TO THE DAIL IN ORDER TO COUNTER THE STRONG PUBLIC PRESSURE HERE IN FAVOUR OF REMOVING SIMILAR RIGHTS ENJOYED BY IRISH CITIZENS IN THE UK.

4. IF ASKED NEWS DEPARTMENT WILL CONFIRM THAT THE MEETING TOOK PLACE AND INDICATE THAT MR HURD USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLACE ON RECORD THE FACT THAT NO COMMITMENT EXISTS FOR HMG TO CONSULT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS AFFECTING NORTHERN IRELAND.

5. FULL RECORD WILL FOLLOW BY BAG.

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INFORMATION D
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NEWS D
SEC D
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PS
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR ONSLOW
PS/MR RIFKIND
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
MR WRIGHT
MR GIFFARD
MR ADAMS
MR GOODISON
LORD N G LENNOX
MR URE

ADDITIONAL DISTN.
NORTHERN IRELAND

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