

From JAMES H. MOLYNEAUX, J.P., M.P. for Antrim, South



House of Commons,
London S.W.1.

18.8.82

Dear Ian

I enclose a
copy of the typescript
of Sloan's second
interview with Abbott,
on 17.11.81 which
makes interesting
reading.

With kind regards

Ever

Jim

Ian Low, Esq. M.P.

- Q1 To what extent would you agree that from 1922 to the end of the 2nd world war Britain was engaged in a financial withdrawal from the South of Ireland? There is evidence to show that after 1925 there was a large scale British land disinvestment in the South while financial and commercial investment was maintained, the value of property sold off before 1939 exceeded new investment.
- A1 After the separation there was a certain amount of military co-operation between Britain and the Free State. Britain then wanted a Free State which was virtually an independent client state for all intents and purposes to evolve into peaceful co-existence.
- Q2 Would you say that N. Ireland has become insulated economically and politically through the practices of the Treasury and Home Office? In the past the Treasury seemed to have enjoyed a lot of autonomy with respect to N.I. In 1940 Churchill was prepared to offer N.I. to De Valera on the condition that he joined Britain in the war against Germany. What is your reaction to the Unionist claim that N.I. is still being economically isolated today?
- A2 In 1930 the Stormont Government had the opportunity to raise revenue and have a large degree of resource control over N.I. They declined to take up this opportunity. In many respects the Ministry of Finance acted as an agent for the Treasury, provided they dispensed the money in a particular way. The Unionist claims of economic isolation are pure rhetoric. For instance, the EEC money which is allocated to N.I. is done on the principle of additionality that money is given on the condition that the government takes up a commitment to meet a certain proportion of the funds allocated. This happens in Scotland, Wales as well as in N.I. but these plans must be prepared in advance. N.I. is still heavily funded.
- Q3 In terms of the relationship between civil servants in Whitehall and Stormont there was isolation, in that as late as 1971 Joe Haines in his book "Politics of Power", page 121-122, states that a senior civil servant assisting Wilson and himself on a trip to Ireland, had never been to the South. Such visits were "not encouraged" by the Home Office. Would you say that this was an accurate reflection on Joe Haines' behalf?
- A3 The Home Office being a domestic department was responsible to the central government and therefore could not be seen to be engaging in talks of a constitutional nature with Dublin. The Unionist government could have accused us of undermining them. In that period there was contact between the Home Office and Dublin on explosives and policing matters. When we finally got rid of Stormont it made it easier for us to engage in talks with Dublin about constitutional matters.
- Q4 If the last anecdote was an example of the state of Anglo-Irish relations ten years ago how would you react to the sceptic's assertion that the prime motivating force for attempting to improve Anglo-Irish relations has been violence in N.I.?
- A4 That is a perfectly reasonable assumption to make. The opportunity that direct rule gave us in 1972 was the opportunity to establish a power-sharing devolved government. If this can be established then the aspiration of half a million catholics could be taken into consideration. Once this is established it is a half-way point to recognizing the interest of the Republic

in N.I.'s future in a constitution sense. The mistake we made at Sunningdale was that we didn't rein in Fitzgerald enough over the Council of Ireland. On the Irish side he was the chief strategist and architect. Cosgrave for all intents and purposes was just window dressing. There are a number of areas where co-operation is vital:- (1) Security (2) Extradition.

By and large the Criminal Justice Act was designed to circumnavigate the problem of extradition but this has failed to a large extent. There are also problems over witnesses crossing the border. The RUC has problems with respect to the preparation of cases to be tried in the Republic. Also, in the Republic judges are political appointees to a much greater extent than they are in the U.K. This would mitigate against the resolving of the problem.

- Q5 What emphasis do both the British and the Irish governments place on a functionalist approach to co-operation? Mitrany's theory maintains that you diminish the relevance of borders by increasing the traffic across it. In the Joint Studies Report reference was made to electricity links between Wales and Wexford and across the land boundary. How serious are these proposals?
- A5 Economic co-operation of any kind is overlaid by political consideration and this is the problem. Unionist fears must be dealt with. We want to present it in such a way that there appears something tangible for the North; and at the same time co-operation economically must not appear to induce any dependence on the South. The Kinsale gas pipe-line is one project which will be pushed forward as the N.I. gas industry is on its knees. As for the Wales-Wexford electricity link there remains a lot of work to be done on the project before it becomes viable. The North-South electricity link is one project which could be advanced. The Wales-Wexford is seen important for the South, not because they want to be linked to us, but because they want access to the continental grid.
- Q6 In terms of the initiation of a greater degree of Anglo-Irish co-operation under which Government in the last ten years have the major changes come about; was it primarily under the present government with the Dublin Summit last December or was it before? In the book "the State in N.I." by Beu, Gibbon and Patterson they assert that it would require a major strategic departure to implement or even formulate a reformist strategy for Ireland. Is one under way?
- A6 The Heath Government in March 1973 acknowledged the Irish Dimension. Rees helped to keep up momentum in the first 3/4 months of his office. After the fall of the power-sharing government we had to rethink it all. Roy Mason stopped all political movement. All the emphasis was on security co-operation and nothing else. Anglo/Irish relations in other areas were not very good. On the security side the IRA came near to total defeat. Thatcher, when she first came to power, wanted to continue this emphasis on security co-operation only, and she wanted to bring to fruition the Neave idea of a return to local government. In the past 2 1/2 years it has come to be recognised by No. 10 that the Republic must have some sort of say in the constitutional position of N.I. One should not get too excited over Fitzgerald's proposals to change articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. It will be hard to get them changed in terms of domestic rule. But it is a way of holding a pistol to H.M.G.'s head and putting pressure on us for further movement. I don't think Fitzgerald has thought it through. It won't change Protestant opinion. The Dublin Summit of December 1980 was really about high visibility. Thatcher wanted a lot of gold braid in

front. Howe and a few other ministers didn't really know why they were there, he and others were told just to shut up and smile. Thatcher recognized in that Summit that she now aims to act in the interest of the United Kingdom as a whole, not just N.I. and unionists are going to have to recognize that she is entitled to have this view taken seriously. The hunger-strike showed what advances have been made. Fitzgerald, by and large, kept his side of the bargain. He slopped down O'Leary when he was inert. He didn't want to upset the apple-cart, because he knew there was a summit coming up. The hunger strike resulted in a lot of diplomatic pressure being put on us especially from France and the Irish-American lobby.

Q7 To what extent do you think that a return to local government in N.I. would enhance co-operation between local Councils on both sides of the border, with adequate safeguards of course?

A7 We don't want to give more power to the Unionists. More importantly the SDLP don't want any return of local government. Dublin's attitude is by and large guided by what the SDLP wants. What we want to do now is to calm down the Unionists and push for a devolved power-sharing government. It is recognized in No. 10 that this is the way forward. Although Thatcher has still got this return to local government in the back of her mind. As well there has been a change in mind of N.I. mainly by other people in the Cabinet which she now recognizes.

Q8 In Dr. Fitzgerald's book "Towards a New Ireland" he talks about the necessity of making several constitutional changes "but few doubt that these changes would be carried without difficulty in the context of specific proposals for reunification if indeed they are not implemented well in advance". Would it be accurate to see this as the blue-print for Dr. Fitzgerald's Constitutional Crusade?

A8 It is a mistake for Fitzgerald to see constitutional changes as any precursor for a United Ireland. In any final settlement for the island of Ireland the entire Irish situation will have to be re-written. There will also be a considerable degree of autonomy in any future federal Ireland although it will be a lopsided federation with 26 county unit and one six county unit. But a political settlement for the island will have to be fudged, and there are a number of ways this can be done (1) a new Federal Republic which would come into existence would join NAT; if partition is removed then the Dublin Government have said that this will be no problem. (2) Alongside this the Commonwealth can be brought into practice. It is in effect a loose federation of English speaking states, and we can play up the Crown or play it down depending on who we are talking to. We can say to the Unionists: look the Queen is the head of the Commonwealth, and let them fly their flags on certain occasions and keep them happy. Then we can say to the Republic that India is a Republic with a President yet a member of the Commonwealth.

Q9 How difficult is it going to be to bring the Unionists into the process. Even before the last summit I found reference in the Belfast Telegraph of 8th August; when Molyneaux in Edinburgh asserted the Scottish Dimension; the social, culture and economic characteristics which set N.I. apart from the rest of Ireland, he then maintained "Irish Dimension invented by modern civil servants is no more than a cynical sham and smokescreen to hide their schemings: Also the Council for the Union - What is your reaction to that?

- A9 Both the Scottish Dimension and the Council for the Union are examples of how monumentably difficult Molyneux is being. As in 1973 the unionists are bitterly opposed to my Council. What we intend to do is to show how effective and beneficial the Anglo-Irish Council can be, and how it is in the interests of all people. The unionists have to be forced to see that they must live with all the people on the island of Ireland; despite what the IRA may do and what their aims may be.
- Q10 Prior to the last summit there was a large article in the Sunday Times. It said that an Anglo-Irish Council with a Parliamentary Tier will be set up. I noticed that about 48 hours before the Summit various newspapers then said that a Parliamentary Tier wouldn't be in the agreement. What actually happened during that period.
- A10 Obviously I can't answer that in detail, but in general there were no last minute changes in what would be on the table. The work for this summit was set up 10 months ago. The Irish under Haughey and Fitzgerald wanted to move faster than us, we have to be more cautious.
- Q11 As you see the setting up of an advisory council would help generally in Anglo-Irish relations and co-operation, to what extent do you see functional economic co-operation being one of the ones where North-South relations can be moved forward using schemes such as facilitating Irish students cheaper even to higher education in N.I.
- A11 The advisory council is not a second rate substitute but something which was advocated in the joint studies. It is not a precursor to an Anglo-Irish intergovernmental Council. With respect an Irish student gaining access to higher education in N.I. an arrangement would be made whereby Irish undergraduates would not be classified as overseas students. The Irish Government would be a reduced rate and they would then pay us.
- Q12 Anglo-Irish relations have been compared to the story of the leaking roof, when storm made attention imperative the climate was against anything other than temporary repair. When the weather was clear the problem could be forgotten. Would you like to comment on this maxim?
- A12 I think that it is a fair reflection of the state of Anglo-Irish relations up until the end of the last Labour Government. However the roof has been blown off and a new political shape of the island of Ireland will have to be worked out, or else there will never be any fair weather ever again. Under Thatcher there has been a significant change in attitude of the Government towards N.I. In addition both Fitzgerald and Haughey have the bit between their teeth. Any future election in the south will be decided largely on the partition issue. Any general election in the north will be decided on the partition issue as well.