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FM DUBLIN
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 98
OF 171140Z FEBRUARY 86
INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

1. WHEN MR NICHOLAS SCOTT MET THE TAOISEACH AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL RUGBY MATCH ON 15 FEBRUARY THE LATTER WAS IN EBULLIENT MOOD. I HAD EARLIER ASKED HIM IF HE WAS FEELING BRUISED AND BATTERED. HE DID NOT DENY THIS BUT SAID THAT EVERY POLITICIAN MUST ACCEPT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BATTERING.
2. HE FREELY ADMITTED THAT HIS PLANS TO RESHUFFLE THE CABINET HAD ALL GONE WRONG. HE HAD WANTED TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE MINISTRY FOR EUROPE IN ORDER TO REDUCE MR BARRY'S BURDENS, WHICH HAD BEEN ENLARGED AS A RESULT OF THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT. ONLY AT A RELATIVELY LATE STAGE HAD HE DISCOVERED THAT THE LAW DID NOT PERMIT HIM TO CREATE A NEW MINISTRY WITHOUT DISSOLVING AN OLD ONE. (I AM ASTONISHED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW, SINCE THIS BECAME CLEAR TO US LAST YEAR WHEN WE WERE LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE IRISH CREATING A MINISTRY USDPMRTHERN IRELAND.) THIS HAD UPSET HIS PLANS, SINCE HE WANTED MRS HUSSEY, WHOM HE HAD ASSIGNED TO THE EUROPEAN JOB, TO STAY IN THE CABINET.
3. HE SAID THAT AT ONE POINT HE HAD TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES HE PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT CONSISTING EXCLUSIVELY OF FINE GAEL MINISTERS PLUS MR SPRING AS TANAISTE AND RELYING ON THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS AND OTHERS FOR SUPPORT IN THE DAIL. (HE REASONED THAT LABOUR TD'S WOULD HAVE HAD TO SUPPORT SUCH A GOVERNMENT FOR FEAR OF BEING DEVASTATED IN A GENERAL ELECTION.) HE SAID HE HAD GOT QUITE KEEN ON THE IDEA BEFORE THE OTHER LABOUR MINISTERS HAD BECOME RECONCILED TO REMAINING IN THE RESHUFFLED CABINET. HE ASSERTED SEVERAL TIMES THAT MR SPRING HAD BEEN VERY LOYAL AND HELPFUL THROUGHOUT THE RESHUFFLE.
4. ON THE AGREEMENT, HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT WE SHOULD HAVE TO DEVISE SOME SYSTEM OF A MORE ELABORATE REPORT EVERY SIX MONTHS TO OUR PARLIAMENTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM TO HAVE A FULL DEBATE ON ITS WORKING. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO DISCUSSING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HOW TO MAKE PROGRESS WITH THE UNIONISTS. MR SCOTT SAID THAT HE THOUGHT MORE ACTION WAS REQUIRED FROM MR HUME. IT WAS NOT SATISFACTORY THAT HE SHOULD ADVOCATE A SIMPLE POSTURE OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE UNIONISTS. FROM DR FITZGERALD'S REPLY I INFERRED THAT HE HAD HAD A HAND IN MR HUME'S LETTER OF 5 FEBRUARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER (WHICH NO DOUBT EXPLAINS THE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION USED BY MR HUME). HE DEFENDED THIS AS A REASONABLE POSITION FOR THE TIME BEING.

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5. MR SCOTT SAID HE WAS GLAD TO SEE SIR JOHN HERMON IN DUBLIN THAT DAY. IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO INCREASE THE FLOW OF INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN THE GARDA AND THE RUC. THE TAOISEACH SAID HE ENTIRELY AGREED AND THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN FIRM INSTRUCTIONS TO THAT EFFECT. HE HAD TO ADMIT THAT THERE WERE SOME RESERVATIONS AMONG INDIVIDUAL GARDAI BUT HE WAS SATISFIED THAT WITH TIME THE HABIT OF COMPLETE CONFIDENCE WOULD GROW.

6. FOREIGN OFFICE PLEASE PASS ADVANCE COPIES TO PS/MR SCOTT AND BELL, SIL, NIO (L).

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