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Taoiseach's visit to Belfast - Thursday, 14 January, 1965

The Taoiseach, accompanied by me, drove to Stormont yesterday. We were met at the Border at 11.45 a.m. by Mr. Jim Malley, Captain O'Neill's Private Secretary, who rode with us to Stormont. We had a Garda car escort from this side of Dundalk to the Border and a R.U.C. police escort from there to Stormont.

Captain O'Neill was at the door of his official residence to welcome the Taoiseach and he and Mrs. O'Neill were hosts at the luncheon which followed immediately. Apart from the Taoiseach, the guests were Mr. Cecil Bateman, Secretary to the N.I. Cabinet, Mr. Kenneth Bloomfield, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr. Jim Malley and myself.

After lunch the two Prime Ministers and the officials walked to the Prime Minister's office. A large number of photographers and some pressmen were at the door.

Inside we sat round the fire in the P.M.'s office. Captain O'Neill, who had described the meeting at lunch as a historic one (meriting champagne), began by saying how glad he was it had at last come about, and the Taoiseach replied that he had been anxious for a meeting for some years to explore possibilities of practical co-operation in the interests of the whole of Ireland.

The following possibilities were specifically mentioned (by the Taoiseach, except as otherwise indicated) and it was agreed on both sides that they, and any other possibilities within the powers of the N.I. Government, should be explored:-

Tourism: joint promotion abroad and encouragement of interflow between the two parts of Ireland. The abolition of

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the Border triptyque system for private cars from 1 April next was mentioned with approval. The N.I. officials expressed interest in securing free passage both ways of hired cars. A general discussion of possibilities between Messrs. Childers and Faulkner was envisaged at a later stage.

Education: facilitating cross-border interchange of pupils, scholarships and teachers, where convenience, economy and other circumstances render this appropriate.

Health: facilitating cross-border arrangements (including sharing of cost) for hospital and specialist services, in case of road accidents, maternity, blood transfusion, etc., where convenience and urgency make this desirable.

Industrial Promotion: some joint promotion and at least sufficient co-ordination to reduce the risk of wasteful bidding against one another. The N.I. officials doubted if this risk could be altogether eliminated; they experience such competition as between N.I. and S.E. England and Scotland.

Agricultural Research: much money was being spent on this and greater co-ordination in research projects and sharing of information could favour both economy and efficiency.

Trade: there was a willingness to consider further reductions of tariffs in favour of genuine N.I. manufactures subject to authoritative proof of origin. If necessary, a GATT waiver would be sought for this in our accession negotiations. Proposed talk between Mr. Faulkner, N.I. Minister of Commerce, and Mr. Lynch, Minister for Industry & Commerce, would cover possibilities generally.

/Electricity

Electricity: high tension connections would ease stand-by requirements; joint development of nuclear power a possibility when this proves economic. N.I. representatives independently affirmed desirability of co-operation in provision of atomic plant to produce electricity.

Administrative

Problems: Bateman (N.I.) himself raised question of further contact on training courses, both official and I.P.A.

Transport: The good relations already existing will be strengthened by Ministerial contacts.

Fisheries and Game

Protection: the desirability of co-ordination in regard to rod and gun licences, open game seasons and game protection arrangements. Sea fisheries policies and problems to be discussed.

Justice: possibility of co-operation in such matters as reciprocal practising rights for lawyers, joint administration of certain charities.

It was accepted that these were illustrations only and that all possibilities of practical co-operation in matters of common interest should be explored. Mr. Lemass will send Captain O'Neill a list of such matters, so that consideration by the various Ministers can begin. Detailed explanatory notes need not be prepared at this stage. After receipt of this letter, Captain O'Neill will indicate when it would be convenient for him to come to Dublin.

After this talk, which lasted about an hour, the party went back to the N.I. Premier's official residence, where Mrs. O'Neill provided tea and Mr. Lemass was introduced to the

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following members of the N.I. Cabinet: Messrs. Faulkner (Commerce), Craig (Development), Neill (Finance), Andrews (Senate), Kirk (Education), McConnell (Home Affairs) and Jones (Attorney General). In conversation with me Mr. Faulkner indicated his desire to meet Mr. Lynch soon. The Taoiseach said he would ask Mr. Lynch to write to him direct.

There was no further discussion after tea and good-byes were said about 5 p.m.

*V. Dub.  
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