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Reference Code: 2005/7/403

Title: Note on a meeting between John Peck, British Ambassador to Ireland, and a member of the Irish cabinet [or possibly a member of staff of the Department of the Taoiseach] on 13 September, 1973, at which subjects of discussion included perceived leaks from Dublin of secret talks between British and Irish officials, and the current pressure being exerted on Brian Faulkner, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party.

Creation Date(s): 13 September, 1973

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 2 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

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Note of discussion with British Ambassador on 13th September, 1973.

The British Ambassador on the afternoon of 13th September, 1973, endeavoured to arrange a meeting with the Taoiseach about an urgent matter the substance of which he did not at the time disclose. As the Taoiseach was engaged he asked to see the undersigned and I agreed to meet him at 4.30 p.m.

The Ambassador handed me a number of newspaper cuttings including Michael McInerney's Irish Times article of 12th instant, Ian Aitkens article ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ the Guardian of 12th instant, the Daily Mirror report headed "Cosgrave's plan for the police" of the 12th instant, and Michael Mills article in the Irish Press on 12th instant. The Ambassador said that these and other reports emanating from Dublin in the last few days had given Mr. Heath's office the impression that there was a very extensive official leaking in Dublin to the extent that they were very apprehensive about the effects in Northern Ireland and on the coming talks at Prime Minister level. He stated that London, for instance, had gone to great lengths to keep publicity about the talks confidential and had, in particular, made no mention about the visit of Foreign Affairs officials to London at the beginning of this week.

The Ambassador stated that Mr. Whitelaw had with great difficulty brought his informal consultations to the stage where he hoped to have a joint meeting next week with the S.D.L.P., Alliance and Official Unionist Parties. If the spate of publicity from Dublin continued he felt pressure will grow on Mr. Faulkner to the extent that he will be unable to bring the Official Unionists to this meeting thereby setting back, probably for months, Mr. Whitelaw's plans for a settlement of the present assembly difficulties.

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The Ambassador also said that London was of the opinion that Prime Ministerial talks were being built up too much. The public would expect a great deal from the talks and the guarded communiqué which could be expected at the conclusion of the talks might consequently give the impression that the talks were a failure.

The Ambassador emphasised the opinion in London that the press articles complained of were so accurate in content that they appeared to be deliberate leaks. His authorities thought the Taoiseach should intervene to ensure that there would be a damping down of the publicity about the talks in Dublin.

I informed the Ambassador that I would pass on his message to the Taoiseach.

The Ambassador also mentioned the impression that there was a very extensive official leaking in Dublin to the extent that they were very apprehensive about the effects in Northern Ireland and on the coming talks at Prime Minister level. He stated that London, for instance, had gone to great lengths to keep publicity about the talks confidential and had, in particular, made no mention about the visit of Foreign Affairs officials to London at the beginning of this week.

The Ambassador stated that Mr. Whitelaw had with great difficulty brought his informal consultations to the stage where he hoped to have a joint meeting next week with the U.K.I.P., Alliance and Official Unionist parties. If the spate of publicity in Dublin continued he felt pressure will grow on Mr. Whitelaw to the extent that he will be unable to bring the official parties to this meeting thereby setting back, probably for some time, Whitelaw's plans for a settlement of the present security difficulties.