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~~Mr. Dwyer~~ ~~28/9/78~~ ~~Mr. Swire~~
LONDON

22 September 1978

~~Mr. O'Donnell~~
~~Mr. Hennessy~~

The Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs

~~Mr. O'Keefe~~

Attention Information Section

I am enclosing copy of self-explanatory letter
from the Ambassador to the editor of the Times
concerning an article in yesterday's Times by
Chris Walker.

Brendan Scannell

Brendan Scannell
First Secretary
Press and Information

Mary
2/11, 26/9, 9/23, 37/1

11/10/78

22nd September 1978

Dear Mr Rees-Mogg

In a report in the Times of 21st September by your Belfast Correspondent, Chris Walker, entitled "Mr Mason in new talks with Ulster Parties", Mr Walker states that Mr Lynch (during his radio interview of 8 January, 1978) "called for Britain to set a date for withdrawal from Ulster". Mr Lynch made no such call. He went out of his way, indeed, as page 5 of the text of his remarks (enclosed) shows, to dispel such possibilities of misunderstanding. Despite this clear statement on his part, the remarks were widely misinterpreted here. Mr Lynch was concerned at this reaction particularly the misinterpretations of what he said in the British Press and this concern led him to issue a further statement on 10th January spelling out again his position on the matter. He went over the ground once more in his speech (enclosed) a month later to the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis on 18th February.

Against this background, it is disturbing to find this misconstruction of the Taoiseach's remarks emerging once more at this stage in a paper of the standing of The Times.

While no useful purpose would be served at this time by entering into public controversy through the letter pages of your paper on this matter, where the facts are not at issue, I have thought it useful to draw the reference to your attention. You know as well as I how misunderstandings have bedevilled our affairs in the past.

By coincidence I had been reading this week Barry O'Brien's life of Lord Russell of Killowen and thought how absurd was Russell's remark that "the Times has done more

than any Irish agitator to keep the people of the two countries apart". Whatever about your paper's position one hundred years ago I have no doubt about it now and I know that you will be as anxious as I am to eliminate possible causes of friction in our relations and will understand my motive in writing to you.

Yours sincerely

←

Paul J G Keating
Ambassador

Mr William Rees-Mogg
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