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1) Mr. Bassett
2) Mr. Dowling



PA MacBride
Principles

Mr. Mansergh

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

2 November, 1988.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
St. Stephens Green,
Dublin 2.

Dear Dermot,

I attach a note on my meeting with Father Wilson on Tuesday. I suspect the Northern authorities would be tactically well-advised to take a less negative attitude. It seems to me that there must be adequate safeguards in the grant giving and monitoring mechanisms, not to mention the criminal law, to prevent the diversion of public funds to paramilitaries, and by its nature Conway Mill is unlikely to be profit-making. Perhaps we could discuss this at some stage.

X | On another subject I am inclined to agree with Bishop Cahal Daly's scepticism as to whether the proposed fair employment legislation, although some advance on the present situation, will make the MacBride Principles redundant. I suspect American pressure (as in the Shorts case) is going to be needed for some time to come to provide some backbone.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Martin Mansergh,
Special Adviser to the Taoiseach.

Note

I met yesterday Fr Desmond Wilson, who was accompanied by Mr Frank Cahill and Mr Alfie Hannaway, two fairly elderly gentlemen who are involved in the running the Conway Mill complex which is essentially an enterprise centre, comprising at present a dozen small companies employing about 40 people.

Fr. Wilson, who is meeting with Charles Brett today, seems to have softened his hostility to the International Fund, now that its activities are to be more heavily concentrated on disadvantaged areas. He put again the case for British Government funding, and the lifting of their veto on assistance from the International Fund. He pointed out that they were a fully accountable organisation, and would be doubly so, if there were receiving grants. The criticisms of their opponents amounted to allegations of fraud. He had had a long discussion with John Hume, and had pointed out the damage that could be caused in the local elections by suggestions that the SDLP were helping to sabotage real job creation in West Belfast (as opposed to ACE schemes). John Hume had promised a neutral attitude, but no approach had been made to Feeney.

The Alliance Party had also visited Conway Mill and had against their expectation been impressed, and he felt that some senior Stormont Civil Servants, though not the NIO, now believed the British Government should change its attitude. I stressed the importance of clearing their lines as far as possible with the SDLP and the Catholic Church in West Belfast on the model of his bridge-building efforts with John Hume and the Alliance Party. He said the International Fund had suggested in a vague way that the British attitude to Conway Mill was supported by the Irish Government officials. I expressed surprise, and asked for evidence of this.