



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Meeting with Bishop Edward Daly

Mr. Corcoran and the undersigned had a meeting with Bishop Edward Daly in Derry on 12 May. It was explained that we were in the city in connection with a meeting of the North-West Study steering group and that it was hoped the Study would be commissioned in the very near future; we pointed out to him that the purpose of the Study was to seek ways of stimulating social and economic regeneration in Derry and the surrounding region. He wished us well in this and said the great problem for Derry had always been the difficulty in overcoming the low level of male employment. There were many families where the male members had not been employed for three generations. Shirt-making and other sectors of the textile industry in which Derry had a deserved reputation now appeared to be in a healthy state; nevertheless, most of the employment involved was female and it would be a great stimulus to the city if some industry creating male employment could be established.

The conversation then turned to the current situation in Derry with Bishop Daly indicating that everything was fairly quiet at present. He attributed this at least partially to the appearance of a new "supergrass" at Maghaberry Prison as a result of which many of the "usual suspects" were lying low or had left town. There had, however, almost been a major catastrophe a short time previously when a 2,000lb bomb which had been left outside one of the local police stations had failed to explode. Apart from anything else, it displayed an amazing lack of vigilance on the part of the security forces who had allowed an obviously suspicious van to be parked without investigating it.

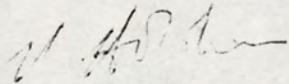
Mr. Corcoran asked if there had been much harassment of civilians in the recent past. The Bishop indicated that there were still several incidents of bad and often stupid behaviour by the security forces. He gave the example of a man being chased into a local church by the Army who then surrounded the building and demanded that the priests hand him over. The Bishop had had to

contact the RUC who had finally admitted that the man was wanted merely for a parking offence! As a result of this incident, Chief Superintendent Turkington had actually phoned to apologise for the behaviour of the security force; this was most unusual and indeed much of the enmity between the RUC and the people of the area had arisen as a result of insensitive and untactful behaviour in the past by Turkington.

With regard to general support for the Provos in Derry, the Bishop said there was a large segment of the nationalist population which could swing in either direction depending on the latest event - the politics of the last atrocity, as he called it. Incidents such as the planting of the 2,000lb bomb were damaging to the IRA cause since they were recognised by the people as not only putting civilians at risk but also being most injurious to economic prospects and employment in Derry. He said he was well acquainted with Martin McGuinness who, unlike many other Provos, was a regular church-goer. He had no doubt that McGuinness was a hard-liner and appeared to be committed to a military rather than a political victory for the IRA. He felt the most chilling thing about McGuinness was his total lack of humour. When Mr. Corcoran raised the question of the Hume-Adams talks, Bishop Daly said that - like most people in Derry - he had complete faith in John Hume. He was not quite sure, however, of just what was going on but he was prepared to accept that John Hume knew what was best.

Finally, there was an exchange of views on the Mawhinney education reform proposals. Bishop Daly said that he had not yet studied the details of the curricular and other changes but that the concept of integrated education was not in itself a problem for him. He stressed, however, that what should be involved was not just the question of integrated pupils but of integrated teachers as well. He said there was a primary school in Derry in which 60% of the pupils were Catholic but which employed only 1 Catholic teacher; there was another with Catholics making up 40% of the pupils but having only 2 Catholic teachers. He believed

nevertheless that integration alone was not going to solve many of the deep-seated problems in society; furthermore, if the Church were to lose control of its schools, education in general would be the loser.



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