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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

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ltr to Selby Johns

cc. PS/AUS (LIR)

1. PS/Mr Bloomfield

Mr Hodges

File PS/204/419/03

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**STAFF IN CONFIDENCE**

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Mr. Selby C. Johns  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
POD - Area 4  
3 Matthew Parker Street  
LONDON SW1

Dear Selby

NEW YORK: MACBRIDE 'LOBBYIST'

Thank you for your letter of 22 January. This letter is to confirm our conversation on Thursday 5 February.

As I said on the telephone it is very much for the FCO to decide who it needs to fill this particular post in the light of the other members of the team but judging from the job description provided by Mr. Mellon, and his conversations with Mr. Bloomfield and with members of the NIO. I must confess we found the candidates, on paper at any rate, disappointing. It seems to us that a good knowledge of Northern Ireland is highly desirable to cope with the possibly ingrained prejudices and misconceptions about the situation in Northern Ireland in the minds of senior politicians in the state capitals within the New York Consular district. This is particularly so if he is going to seek to counter the influence of radical Irish/American groups. We noted therefore with considerable surprise that two of the candidates had no experience whatsoever of Northern Ireland. The experience of the third is only through work on the Republic of Ireland desk which has of course involved visits to Northern Ireland and contacts with people there but we query whether it is sufficient.

I should perhaps say that my senior NIO colleagues who have met (and are very appreciative of the good hard work he has done in that post) consider that for the New York post as described by Mr. Mellon he is far less suited than either of the two NIO candidates whom they also know.

I should be grateful if you would feed in these comments to the right quarters and see that they are taken account of in the selection the person to fill this post. I realise of course that other views will have to be taken into account, notably those of the New York Consulate and the Washington Embassy.

Yours

MISS R.D.B. PEASE  
Principal Establishment & Finance Officer

**STAFF IN CONFIDENCE**