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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. HATFIELD
CABINET OFFICE

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 6 August (reference A09227) about Anglo/Irish relations. The Prime Minister has noted that the Irish Government are taking steps to implement their undertaking to enfranchise British citizens living in the Irish Republic, although she has noted further that the situation has changed considerably since that undertaking had been given. For the present, the Prime Minister has commented that she has no intention of having further bilateral meetings with the Taoiseach.

I am sending a copy of this to Francis Richards (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

T. FLESHER

9 August 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A09227

MR COLES

*I am aware of this - but
 events have changed
 matters since then. Certainly, I JF
 have no intention of having further 6/8
Anglo-Irish Relations bilateral meetings with
 the Taoiseach, not*

You wrote to Mr Richards on 20th July, reporting the Prime Minister's comments on FCO telegram no. 87 to Dublin.

2. Sir Leonard Figg confirmed when he was over here yesterday that the Irish Government were taking steps to implement their undertaking to enfranchise British citizens living in the Republic. He thought that the Irish Attorney General would probably succeed by the end of the year in circumventing a constitutional obstacle which has been delaying matters.

3. The undertaking stems from the joint studies which preceded and were endorsed by the Prime Minister's meeting with the then Taoiseach on 6th November 1981. The White Paper of 15th November 1981 on the Joint Studies (Cmnd 8414) noted the Irish Government's intention to introduce legislation to enable United Kingdom citizens resident in the Republic to vote in elections to the Dail and the Irish Government's intentions to introduce legislation to this effect, and went on: "the British side welcomed this intention which would, if fulfilled, result in greater reciprocity in voting rights at national elections".

4. As to numbers, the 1971 census showed that there were about 50,000 citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies resident in the Irish Republic. There are thought to be about 500,000 citizens of the Republic resident in the United Kingdom.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr Richards in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

6th August 1982