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Confidential

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MEMORANDUM ON A DISCUSSION WITH MR. KEARNEY, THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER IN DUBLIN, IRELAND.

Mr. Kearney discussed this afternoon a number of matters concerning Ireland with Mr. Glazebrook and Mr. Holmes.

1. PARTITION

Mr. Kearney felt that the economic factor was highly important in maintaining the partition of Ireland. He thought that if the Dublin Government could find some way of maintaining the shipping, ~~of~~ linen and other industries of the north, the northerners would forget many of their objections to union. Mr. Kearney had made a suggestion along these lines to Mr. De Valera, but Mr. De Valera is not greatly interested in tariffs and economic problems. Mr. Kearney did not believe that the hope of uniting all Ireland was an important factor in deterring Dublin from removing all ties with the Commonwealth.

2. IRELAND AND THE COMMONWEALTH

Mr. Kearney expressed the opinion that the United Kingdom and other British Governments had made a mistake in admitting that the Irish Constitution of 1936 was not contrary to the principles of the Commonwealth. The purpose of that Constitution was to remove the Oath of Allegiance to the King which is the principal legal bond holding the Commonwealth together. The attitude taken to Ireland at this time may have been very far-sighted and a part of the policy which culminated in 1938 in the handing over of the Treaty Ports. However, the attitude towards the Constitution was illogical and did violence to the principles of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Kearney said that in his view there were two alternative policies possible with regard to Ireland. In the first place, the Statute of Westminster could be extended to admit Ireland with its present constitution or else Ireland could be told that she could go her own independent way with the Commonwealth's blessing.