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I was very glad to see you with your colleagues at Hillsborough last week, and I feel that we covered a great deal of useful ground at the meeting. I am sure that it is only by pretty regular face-to-face meetings of this sort that we can avoid any confusion and misunderstanding as we press ahead on our somewhat difficult course.

I have now seen the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and taken the opportunity to report to him directly on that part of our discussions which concerned security. I am absolutely certain, as I said at the meeting, that anything which can be done to encourage overt co-operation between the two police forces will be both useful in itself, and greatly reassuring to public opinion here.

We had a very useful discussion, I thought, on the question of status. You were good enough to recognise that we have special problems on this front, and to suggest that we should have an opportunity to see the wording you will propose to use, so that we could be sure that it would assist our position. By the end of the meeting, we had a fairly clear idea of the general line that would be taken. Nevertheless, I think it would be most useful once you have taken the matter a little further to let us see the precise wording which you propose. As I have told you on the last two occasions we met, this really is an issue of the greatest possible importance to us, and our whole political stance can be undermined by suggestions that the declaration given by you is without meaning or value.

I think we also need to keep in close touch about the work of the Commission on Law Enforcement. Because we are not directly a party to this, we do not have the information which is available to you about its progress. I think we want to be sure that by some means or other this question of fugitive offenders is treated as a matter of urgency. We would find it most difficult to press ahead with the other aspects of the Sunningdale Agreement, in a situation where there was no clear indication of the action to be taken.

On the Council of Ireland functions, I felt that we made very useful progress, and our respective officials can now get down to work.

There was however one aspect of this which I neglected to mention because of the pressure of business that day. In my discussions at party level here, I have been experiencing great difficulty in selling the idea of a two-tier Council. The concept of setting up a Council of Ireland with both a ministerial and a parliamentary tier creates the impression of an all-Ireland government and parliament in embryo. I realise, of course, that the Sunningdale Agreement includes a commitment to the two-tier system. I should, however, like to tell you frankly that I think the notion of the second tier may prejudice acceptance of the whole scheme at this stage. I have no doubt that it may have a useful part to play in the ultimate machinery of the Council; but it would be a great pity to see the whole project founder because of an insistence upon creating the entire structure at once. This, I think, is something we ought to consider further.

There is already encouraging support for our Coalition Executive but the Council of Ireland is proving an obstacle which, if wrongly handled, could bring down the whole affair. Incidentally

I am enclosing the leading article from last night's Belfast Telegraph. This newspaper has consistently supported our policies, including Sunningdale. In expressing its viewpoint on extradition it really is speaking for a very large section of our community.

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