

7.30 p.m.

Mr. Hume: It is right and proper that we should debate at the greatest possible length and in the greatest possible detail the Agreement which was arrived at in Sunningdale last weekend. I would be much more impressed by the sincerity of those who sought this debate if they attempted to have a real debate, one in which we could go into all the details. Instead, we are meeting in a hurry and talking into the night. At least, it is the intention of those who called this meeting that it should go on into the night when, perhaps, no one here will be listening and when no one outside will be listening. It would have been better to set several days aside to discuss the Agreement in greater detail. However, that has not been done. We are here today in emergency circumstances to discuss the Agreement, so let us discuss it.

Long before the Sunningdale Agreement hit the Press or became public the predictable reactions came from every quarter. The Agreement was condemned out of hand in many areas even before it had been reached.

An hon. Member: It was predictable.

Mr. Hume: When one examines the disparate views of those who have condemned it one wonders what is their idea of a solution. One group wants a 32-county Republic with four regional parliaments. Another wants a 32-county socialist workers' Republic with a democratised Stormont and a Bill of Rights. Another does not know whether it wants total integration with Britain or an independent Ulster, and those who want an independent Ulster are not sure whether they want a six-county Ulster or a nine-county Ulster. That is the opposition to the Sunningdale Agreement. If those who hold such disparate views think they can work out some cohesive solution to the problems of Northern Ireland God help the people.

We have read and studied all the reactions. They are predictable and familiar. The language which has been

issued is the language of the past. These people speak the politics of the past. They preach the politics of confrontation and conflict, politics which we know, to our cost, lead only to the grave.

An hon. Member: You started it.

Miss Coulter: What about your statement that there would be a united Ireland or nothing?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Hume: In a situation in which people held rigid views one had to be a hate figure in order to succeed in politics, and the greater the hate, the more one's supporters encircled one in tribal fashion. That is the politics of the past, the politics we are being offered by the opponents of this Agreement. They measure the Agreement against the institutions of the past in the sense that they are making no real effort to look at the problem which has caused so much trouble, not just in the present situation but for generations. From their criticisms it is easy to see that they are measuring what has come out of Sunningdale against the institutions of the past. Some people measure it against the old Stormont Parliament. Other critics measure it against the institutions of the Irish Republic. What all these people fail to recognise is that those institutions have failed the people of this part of Ireland, and the price of that failure is more than 900 graves.

It is no mean problem which faces the people of Northern Ireland and their elected representatives today, but if it is approached with sincerity it can be solved. What is the task? It is to do what has not been possible in three centuries. We have to recognise that there are conflicting aspirations in this community and accept that the way forward is by finding a means of accommodating the differing aspirations without anyone having to sacrifice his principles. It is no mean task to create such an accommodation and to allow for the free expression and pursuit of those aspirations. Unfortunately for the

people of Northern Ireland what we have had in the past consistently and continually has been conflict and the pursuit of victory by one section over the other. Both sections have been guilty of the pursuit of absolute victory. If we have learned anything we should have learned by now that that is the road to destruction.

Having looked back across the centuries and having seen that all have been at fault in pursuing the politics of conflict and confrontation surely we can see, as other societies in other parts of the world have seen, that the only way forward is when these conflicting traditions come together without sacrificing anything that is basic to them.

Mr. Hutchinson: You did not sacrifice anything.

Mr. Hume: In other words, instead of conflict, we should create consensus, consent and partnership.

Mr. Laird: Now tell us about Sunningdale.

Mr. Hume: Mr. Laird asks me to tell him about Sunningdale. I am telling him about the basic philosophy that underlies the Sunningdale document, a philosophy which says that there is no future for the people of Northern Ireland—if he disagrees with this let him say it—unless they find a means of accommodating the differing aspirations without any of those aspirations being given up. That is the task and that is no mean task. If anyone examines the Sunningdale document from that point of view he will find that that is precisely what we have offered to the people.

An hon. Member: Tell us about it.

Mr. Hume: There are two separate aspirations. There is the aspiration held by the people of your side of the House, the Loyalist aspiration of those who wish to maintain the link and remain part of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Laird: Why were we not there? Should we not have been there?

Mr. Hume: I am not yet so good as to be able to answer two questions at once. I am answering one of his questions. When I am finished I will answer another for him.

What has come out of this Agreement that the Loyalist population could say gave assurance to them and to their aspiration? What has come out should not be under-estimated by anyone. It is now clearly laid down and guaranteed that there will be no attempt ever to coerce the people of Northern Ireland against their will. That is clearly laid down. It is not only laid down in a solemn declaration by the Irish Government but will also be lodged internationally with the United Nations. That is a declaration that we fully support.

I might also point out that perhaps more important than any declaration from any Dublin Government which would give assurance to the majority of the people of the North about their future status of about any attempt at coercion is the commitment for the first time of the elected representatives of one section of this community to the institutions of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Faulkner (South Down): Hear, hear.

Mr. Hume: There is more solidity in that commitment than in any commitment that can come from anywhere else.

Fear is being expressed about the Council of Ireland. Rather than diminish the status of Northern Ireland the creation of this Council will increase it when members of a sovereign Government will sit down as equals with members of a Northern Ireland Executive who will not be members of a sovereign Government. When you talk of your fear of a Council of Ireland I might remind you that this is not the first time that that subject has been discussed. On 23rd June, 1921, when the Stormont Parliament nominated its

[Mr. Hume]
13 members to a Council of Ireland, the list was composed of the following well-known Republicans:

"Sir R. N. Anderson, Rt. Hon John M. Andrews, Mr. J. Milne Barbour, Rt. Hon. Sir R. Dawson Bates, Mr. William Coote, Rt. Hon. Sir James Craig, Bart.; Captain Herbert Dixon, Mr. William Grant, Dr. Robert J. Johnstone, Sir Crawford McCullagh, Mr. Samuel McGuffin, Mr. Robert J. McKeown, and Major David G. Shillington."--[OFFICIAL REPORT, 23rd June, 1921; Vol. 1, c.18.]

[*Interruption.*] If Mr. Paisley cares, he can look up the reference.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: I accept that.

Mr. Hume: Those people were nominated to become members of a Council of Ireland against the background of an Act of Parliament which actually provided for one Parliament for the whole of Ireland.

Dr. Carson (Armagh): Would the Member give way?

Mr. Hume: No, I am not giving way.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: You are not giving way?

Mr. Hume: No.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: You will give way to me.

Mr. Hume: You had three hours.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: How many hours had you at Sunningdale?

Mr. Hume: Mr. Speaker.—

Mr. Hutchinson: Give way, Sir.

Mr. Hume—the point at issue is that there are absolute guarantees for the aspirations of one section of the people. Now I would turn to the other aspiration, that which the people on this side of the House represent, that which aspires to saying—

Rev. Dr. Paisley: Would the Member

give way on that point before he leaves it? It is an important point. He says he wants consensus, he wants a debate—

Mr. Hume: I have not given way yet.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: Will you give way?

Mr. Hume: No.

Mr. Hutchinson: Because you are afraid; that is why. [*Interruption.*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Each Member will have a chance to speak.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: On a point of order.

Mr. Currie: That is one way of getting in.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: It is a pity that the hon. Member does not realise that that is not the only thing that the Loyalists are interested in.

Mr. Currie: That is hardly a point of order.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: They are interested in the way of liberty.

An hon. Member: That is not a point of order.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: I do not care whether it is a point of order or not. I will wait until the Chair rules.

Mr. Currie: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would you please rule whether that is a point of order?

Rev. Dr. Paisley: I have not finished it yet.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask Members to allow me to decide the conduct of this debate. Mr. Hume.

Mr. Hume: I come to the—

Rev. Dr. Paisley: I was still on a point of order. I sat down—

Mr. Speaker: Dr. Paisley, briefly.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: Could I ask you to rule on this, Mr. Speaker? Is it in order for an hon. Member to misrepresent totally the views of the people by not giving any consideration whatsoever to those matters that follow from the link, personal liberty in the sphere of a personal relationship? Those are the things that we are interested in safeguarding.

Mr. Hume: I have not finished my speech yet. You might have occasion to regret what you have said by the time I have finished.

I had started to say that I would deal with the aspiration as represented by the people on this side on the House who want—

Mr. Laird: Would you answer my question?

Mr. Speaker: I am not allowing this cross-talk. I must ask that the moderation that there has been so far should be allowed to continue. Each Member will be allowed to speak and to put forward any points he wants. I cannot allow this cross-talk. Mr. Hume.

Mr. Hume *rose*.

Mr. Laird: Will you give way?

Mr. Hume: No.

Mr. Laird: Will you answer my question?

Mr. Hume: A large section of the people believe in the eventual unification of this country by agreement and by consent. It is very important to them that it has now been clearly established that what prevents the unification of this country is the wish of a majority of people in Northern Ireland. That and that alone is what prevents it. That of itself underlines the fact that violence cannot possibly be justified in bringing about that unity. In other words, the only way that such unity can come about is by agreement and by consent. Since the British Government have made it clear that it is only the wishes of the majority of the people in Northern

Ireland which are preventing unity coming about then there can be no justification whatsoever for the continuation of violence to achieve such an objective in this part of the country.

It can also be said that institutions have been set up; institutions which will bring about a partnership between North and South and which can allow for the full and free expression of that aspiration. These are institutions into which have been built safeguards for those who oppose that aspiration. There are those who criticise this. On the one hand there are those who say that on our side of the fence there are too many safeguards built in. We support the building in of those safeguards because if a solution to our problems is not built on trust then it is not built on anything.

I am quite happy to build in safeguards which protect the interests and the views of my fellow citizens who differ with me in aspirations because unless I can build a basis of trust with them, and unless the people I represent can build a basis of trust with the people they represent, then this community has no future.

Mr. Laird: Some trust.

Mr. Hume: If you examine all of the criticisms of Sunningdale you will find what the critics on each side are saying is: "We do not trust the other side."

Mr. Harvey: Do you expect us?

Mr. Hume: If they are right then is there any solution to this problem other than total conflict and total war between the different sections of this community? Is that the solution?

An hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Millar (North Belfast): It would be a final one.

Mr. Hume: If some of those critics had the breadth of vision and intelligence to look at some of the problems in other parts of the world they would find that where there are

[Mr. Hume]
 conflicting communities inside one country the solution was only arrived at finally when tolerance was accepted as the basis of the way forward and consensus rather than conflict prevailed. If people do not agree with that then they are entitled to their view, but I am entitled to ask them what is their alternative which does not involve continuing conflict.

The question of the Council of Ireland has been put forward by some people in this House as a means whereby people will be cajoled into something against their wishes. The assumption is that we on this side of the House will always line up with the Dublin Government against their fellow Northerners.

Mr. Hutchinson: Certainly.

Mr. Hume: Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker. Had any of the people opposite been at Sunningdale they might have seen that on many occasions we in the North united against the rest of them because we know the depth of this problem more than either a Dublin or a London Government. We in the North know the feelings and the strength of feelings that our different sections have about their aspirations, and that dominated our thinking. We understood not only the feelings of our own supporters but the feelings of those who have traditionally opposed us. It is that type of understanding of a problem that is required if we are to try to resolve it.

Central to a resolution of that problem is the question of law and order. [Interruption.] We have heard much debate in this House on this subject. Presumably all would agree with me when I say that law and order is required; law and order which has the respect and full support of every section of this community, and that we need forces of law and order which have the respect and the full support of every section. It may not have occurred to some people who react instantly to everything that is either said or done or who do not attempt to analyse or un-

derstand the problem, that one of the reasons why there is political violence in this community, whether they like it or not, is that a section of this community did not identify itself with the R.U.C.

Miss Coulter: You encouraged it.

Mr. Hume: If you read the Sunningdale document, Mr. Speaker, you will find that the proposals about policing are designed to ensure that every section of this community gives full support to the police because we—and let this go on the record clearly—have no intention of accepting responsibility for governing this community unless we are also prepared to accept that we must give our full support to the police service.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: To the R.U.C.?

Mr. Hume: Yes, to the R.U.C. in the conditions that are laid down in the document.

Miss Coulter: As it stands now?

Mr. Hume: Let me talk about the conditions. Let me see what you have to say against those conditions. Do you object to an independent complaints procedure for complaints against the police? That is in the document. Do you object to an all-party committee of this Assembly coming together to advise on the best methods of providing effective policing throughout Northern Ireland and public identification with those police of all sections of the community throughout Northern Ireland?

Rev. Dr. Paisley rose.

Mr. Laird: Oh, he has given way.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: In the White Paper the Assembly was to have direct representation on the Police Authority. That has been sacrificed and this Assembly—

An hon. Member: No.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: Oh, yes, it has. The hon. Gentleman opposite was not in

when I was speaking. I come in and listen to all of my opponents.

Mr. Hume: I heard you and I will reply to it.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: Another thing I want to say is that if the document is clearly read it will be found that at no time is the R.U.C. mentioned in it. Its name is completely obliterated from the document. Show me one line where it refers to the R.U.C. That is the first thing. The second thing is that I agree, and, of course, we all agree, that this Assembly should be able to make its views known on policing. We have now been reduced to the same standard as a district council, to have only an advisory capacity, whereas in the White Paper this Assembly, not the Executive and not the Council of Ireland, was promised direct representation on the Police Authority.

Mr. Hume: I have heard what Mr. Paisley has had to say about the White Paper and what he regards as an apparent contradiction with the Sunningdale Communique. There is no contradiction at all. What the Sunningdale Communique commits the Secretary of State to doing is consulting the Northern Ireland Executive, who will consult with the Council of Ireland. That does not prevent the Secretary of State appointing Members of this Assembly to the Police Authority. In no way does it prevent that.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: In the White Paper the Assembly was to be consulted.

Mr. Hume: How do you consult the Assembly other than by consulting the leaders of the parties? *[Interruption.]* I do not see any contradiction in the two documents.

Mr. Laird: There is.

Mr. Hume: I accept fully that if we are to have a police service acceptable in every part and working in every part of Northern Ireland all political views should be consulted. If hon. Members

opposite care to read the paragraph under which there is discussion about the Council of Ireland and the link which policing would have with it, they will see that it suggests that under the auspices of the Council both Police Authorities would be asked to discuss. What are the two problems that they are being asked to discuss? There are the questions of community identification with the police and political violence, both of which are directly related, because if we can achieve that we are well on the way to achieving agreement. Let us remember that at Sunningdale we were not just talking about detection as regards something that had happened. We were talking about laying the foundations to ensure prevention of political violence, and that can be done only when we have full support and backing.

Another paragraph has come in for a lot of comment. It suggests that when the institutions are working effectively and the security situation permits the British Government would be prepared to discuss with the Northern Ireland Executive and the police the question of the devolution of police powers. Let it be said that nobody on this side of the House is happy about any British Government controlling the police services for this part of Ireland. We would be happy in the situation as outlined in that paragraph to discuss the problem with them.

Make no mistake about it and do not run away with the idea that we want for evermore, amen, our police services to be in the hands of the British Government. That is the mistake that you people make all the time. You are so blinded with the past that you do not see the significance of what we have been doing. We admit freely that our will has been forged by the fact that we have had to endure and see so many deaths in this community. *[Interruption.]* This has brought the situation home to us and, if it has not brought it home to you, it is time that you thought about it.

An hon. Member: Catch yourself on.

Mr. Hume: The only way forward in this community is not by trying to base our political thinking for the future on institutions which have failed us in the past but rather by trying to build a new set of institutions which can accommodate the conflicting aspirations of the people in this community and provide a basis for lasting peace, not a basis for recurring conflict and violence.

Mr. Hutchinson: A united Ireland?

Mr. Hume: Mr. Paisley referred to the fact that his personal liberty would be infringed in the Republic of Ireland. It might interest Mr. Paisley to know that at one stage in the discussions, when the British were suggesting that a majority of the people in the North might want to join with the Republic of Ireland, we objected because we do not want to join with the Republic of Ireland.

Hon. Members: Oh.

Miss Coulter: Not yet.

Mr. Hutchinson: Come again.

Mr. Hume: Just listen. We do not want to join with the Republic of Ireland. We want an entirely new Ireland, which will ensure that the personal liberties of individuals and particular religious viewpoints will be protected. If hon. Members read the paragraph on human rights in the Sunningdale Communique they might discover that we have already gone a long way towards that—

Mr. Laird: A new Ulster?

Mr. Hutchinson: A united Ireland.

Mr. Hume—in the sense that one of the first duties of the Council of Ireland will be to consider how best the European Convention of Human Rights, which includes all the rights about which Dr. Paisley is worried, can be legislated into the domestic law, North and South, and to consider what

arrangements, administrative or judicial, might be necessary to ensure that those rights are protected. There are a lot of misconceptions, some of them deliberate and others due to sheer ignorance about Sunningdale.

Mr. Laird: Will the hon. Member give way?

Mr. Hume: I am just about to finish.

Mr. Laird: Just before you finish.

Mr. Hume: All that I am saying—

Mr. Laird: You gave way to Dr. Paisley.

Mr. Hume: No, I will not give way.

Rev. Dr. Paisley: Give way to the man.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Mr. Laird is the next speaker.

Miss Coulter: The only things he would give away, John, are blood and lives.

Mr. Hume: All that we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that if we look at Sunningdale and our eyes are blinded by past suspicions or prejudices we will achieve nothing. But if, instead, we recognise that what we have had in the past, both North and South, has not solved the problems of the people of this island we will recognise that we will have to look for new institutions. That is what we have been doing. It is easy to remain in the old mould. It is easy to cry, "Sell-out." But the old mould is the old politics and is there anybody left who thinks that those old politics have given us a solution?

Mr. Burns: You have got what you wanted.

Mr. Hume: There are people calling "sell-out" to us, too. If the word "sell-out" were taken out of the political vocabulary there would be a lot of speechless men in Ireland, North and South. The old mould is the old politics.

the politics of hatred, confrontation and conflict and that leads, as we know, straight to the grave. We need new thinking. We need courage and vision to lead our separate traditions forward into building a new North and into building a new Ireland, not in coercion—

Hon. Members: A new Ulster.

Mr. Hume—but in partnership. All right; let us have it. But let us build it in partnership because that is the only way in which to build it, and let us remember that the new moulds have been created at Sunningdale and that it is now up to the people and, unlike the gentlemen opposite, I am convinced that the mass of the people want to build. [*Interruption.*]

Mr. Laird *rose.*

Mr. Currie: Now it is your turn, John. Let us hear the words of wisdom.

8.01 p.m.

Mr. Laird: If you listen carefully enough, you may.

This looks as if it is going to be a lengthy debate and it is not my intention to take up the time of this Assembly with any unnecessary chat. I propose to put my points clearly and to make my speech as brief as possible. First of all, may I put in a small bit of background in regard to the situation prior to the Sunningdale talks? In doing so I will be repeating a number of things which have already been said during the debate but, for the sake of the record and for the sake of political historians who will be looking at this period, it is necessary to put the views of the various political groupings which comprise the United Unionist group in this Assembly.

When it comes to the concept of a united Ireland may I say that I have tried previously to explain the feelings of myself and the people whom I represent? I may not have succeeded in doing this but it was clearly spelled out

in paragraph 112 of the Government's White Paper of last March in which the Westminster Government gave a clear commitment that they would invite all sections of elected representatives in Northern Ireland to discuss a Council of Ireland. I would draw the Assembly's attention to the wording:

"True progress in these matters can only be achieved by consent. Accordingly, following elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Government will invite the Government of the Republic of Ireland and the leaders of the elected representatives of Northern Ireland opinion to participate with them in a conference to discuss how the three objectives set out in the Paper for Discussion may best be pursued ..."

Her Majesty's Government at Westminster have failed to honour that pledge by failing to invite the leaders of the elected representatives of Northern Ireland opinion to the Conference. The question that I sought to put to Assemblyman Hume—I had hoped that he would have waited until he heard what I was going to say but he scurried out of the Chamber and I might have to wait until another occasion before I can put this question to him—

Mr. Fitt (North Belfast): I will answer you. Yes?

Mr. Laird: Assemblyman Fitt, Assemblyman Hume's leader, has arrived and I should like to ask him if he believes that we should have been excluded from the Sunningdale Conference, if he believes that all sections of opinion should have been included, if he believes that we on this side of the House represent a valid viewpoint and that that viewpoint should have been aired at the Sunningdale Conference, not in a half-hearted fashion as a result of a second-class type of invitation but as a result of a full invitation to participate in the Conference. I look forward with great interest to the reply which Assemblyman Fitt will give.

I believe that the failure of the Westminster Government to honour their pledge in paragraph 112 of the White Paper has deeper implications than the mere exclusion of the