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Mr. Ronans:

I was in Derry on the week-end of Saturday/Sunday, 20/21 September, and had conversations with several people.

There are some items of immediate consequence which I should report.

- (i) a seventeen-year-old boy shot in Derry during the events of 12-13 August is expected to die. He is in a Belfast hospital and a further attempt at operation is being made. He is in a coma and is not expected to recover. He appears to have been struck in the chest by a dum-dum bullet and already has taken 86 stitches but haemorrhage continues. If he dies, his young friends in the Flats threaten to sack the RUC main barracks in Derry - the Victoria Barracks. The Army have indicated that they will resist any such attempt with arms. Paddy Doherty, in an attempt to save the situation, has suggested to the Army that they should have the RUC vacate the barracks for some day and he, on his side, will keep the boys away from it if at all possible. Later, the RUC could quietly re-occupy the barracks.
- (ii) Mr. Eamonn McCann, Northern Ireland Labour Party and Peoples Democracy, proposes to hold a march to commemorate October 5th. The march would begin at the Waterside Station, cross the Craigavon Bridge, and possibly end up at Guildhall Square or might even erupt into the Diamond. The Civil Rights leaders, including the Derry City Defence Association, are totally opposed to such a march and will not participate in it but McCann is likely to go ahead with it whether it is banned or not.
- (iii) Paisley's Burntollet manifestation may have been a partial failure - not more than a few hundred people, at most, turning up. It was a nasty wet day but, even so, Burntollet is not far from the Waterside and a greater crowd might have been expected. In connection with this point I developed a feeling from people who are acquainted with Presbyterians in the Derry area that Paisley may have peaked out in that area. This is only a very superficial indication as yet, and nothing should be built on it, bearing in mind, in particular, that Paisley's real basis of support is in Belfast. The turn-outs for Craig next weekend and again for the re-opening of the Stormont Parliament on September 30 should be carefully watched to see if they show any sign of a loss of support by the extremist paisleyites.
- (iv) the barricades in Bogside are definitely being taken down, starting today, and will be replaced by white lines. The present practical situation is that the RUC will not be allowed to enter the Bogside and, in any event, they show no great desire to do so. Army M.P's will be asked to come in for specific jobs as and when the need arises. The Derry Citizens Defence Association remain well organised and have managed very successfully to contain trouble-makers through their own vigilantes and a special group which acts as an informal CIB with considerable success, as the community generally is anxious to assist them.

x military policemen.

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- (v) acting on the assurances recently given by the Northern Ireland Attorney General, the Derry Citizens Defence Association is encouraging everyone against whom charges might be made later to give evidence to the Scarman Tribunal and has set up an office manned by solicitors who are presently taking this evidence and will submit it to the solicitors for the Scarman Tribunal. The idea is that, even if the Attorney General's guarantees are not watertight or sufficiently extensive, the volunteering of evidence to the Scarman Tribunal will make it virtually impossible to prosecute in the future for any activities during the events investigated by the Tribunal.

Apart from these remarks on more immediate events, I obtained the views of several people on the current situation and on the prospects in the medium and long term. These views might be summarised as follows:-

(1) Mr. Sean Keenan's views

Mr. Keenan is an elderly man and a Nationalist of long-standing. He wondered why we had not raised Partition at the United Nations, as "justice" should have been on our side. I took him very gently on this subject and explained Mr. Aiken's attitude on this question over the years and ended with an explanation of the difficulty we have even now in getting any item on the North in the Agenda of the General Assembly. Mr. Keenan listened carefully but clearly finds it very difficult to understand that the United Nations is not a Court of Justice. As you know, he is the Chairman of the Derry Citizens Defence Association but the real leader is the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Paddy Doherty, who is also Vice-Chairman of Derry City Action Committee. /The Chairman of this Committee is Mr. Claude Wilton, who has virtually been forgotten in the area as he has not identified himself with "free Derry"./

(2) Mr. Doherty's views

Mr. Doherty expressed complete satisfaction with everything the Taoiseach has said and done in recent weeks, including the Taoiseach's speech of 20th September. He stated emphatically that he was entirely against any political talks between Dublin and the Unionist regime at this time but not against a continuance of economic co-operation. Mr. Doherty, although understanding very well the advisability of approaching the United Nations on a Civil-Rights basis, is not particularly interested in that approach. He feels that, if the situation in the North deteriorates seriously (for example to the point where Craig might go for UDI), we should go to the United Nations on a straight re-unification basis and, assuming the British Army steps aside, we would be expected to intervene. He admitted, in further conversation, that this prospect is not very likely and that the Civil-Rights aspect is a useful approach in present circumstances but, as I mentioned earlier, he is not really interested in it.

Mr. Doherty, who is a foreman for a building contractor, has obviously made enormous strides in developing moderate and intelligent leadership. I understand that about twelve of his Committee are followers of Eamonn McCann or of the extreme

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IRA. On all critical issues, however, they are out-voted by a total of 17 moderates on whom Mr. Doherty can count. This enables him to take initiatives on occasions, which are not pleasing to the hard-liners, knowing that the Committee as a whole will back him up e.g. when Mr. Doherty decided that it was necessary to take down the barricades in order, as he put it, to retain the initiative, he knew that he would have majority support, and all the rest including the "negotiations" with the British Army representatives was just for show.

There is a distinct possibility that Mr. Doherty is being groomed as the successor to Mr. Eddie MacAteer and may be nominated on the Nationalist ticket in due course for the Foyle Constituency. This would put him in direct opposition to Mr. John Hume, M.P.

(3) Mr. Hume's views

I had a long conversation with Mr. Hume at his home and we covered a lot of ground. It should be said first of all, that Mr. Hume has succeeded in identifying himself with the defence of the Bogside. The physical defence of the Bogside is a matter of past history and I am thinking here of its political defence. I should mention that Mr. Hume was not in Derry on August 12. He was on holiday in Bunbeg and his wife (I believe she is from somewhere near Creeslough) did not telephone him until some time early in the morning of August 13 and Hume came back to Derry that day. He keeps in very close touch with the Derry Citizens Defence Association and has not moved ahead of them in his public statements, whereas Mr. MacAteer made what now appears to be the mistake of suggesting the removal of the barricades 10 days or so too soon. I have no doubt that Mr. MacAteer's popularity has decreased considerably, while Mr. Hume has retained a position of considerable influence. Among the points which emerged from my conversation with him the most important are the following:-

- (i) Most of the Opposition M.P's are almost certain to attend Stormont on 30 September. Conversations are going on between them in order to get as much agreement as possible on this.
- (ii) Mr. Hume is not entirely happy about the Taoiseach's speech of 20th September. I got him to explain to me his reasoning and also tried to explain to him the thinking which led to the Taoiseach's making this speech at the present time. I think I could say that Mr. Hume regards such phrases as "those living in the Six Counties who share our desire for unity" as giving ammunition to Paisley. He does not dispute the idea; he simply regards such phrases as unnecessary in the first place and, being unnecessary, impolitic in present circumstances. He also feels that the reference to formal international recognition of Stormont is irrelevant; this is not what Stormont seeks in any case. On a related point he also remarked that any suggestion of tri-partite discussions would be refused by Stormont and that there is no point in inviting a sharp rebuff. On the whole, however, he accepted the view that the Taoiseach has good reasons for stating long-term policy in the manner done in this speech but he hopes that that question will now be left to rest and that we should concentrate our efforts on obtaining bilateral communication with London. His published

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remarks reflect accurately his point of view - and are clearly carefully weighed words.

- (iii) He is quite content with the situation in New York at the present time. As I explained it to him, we remain in a position to maintain a threat of pressure upon the U.K. which may help the UK in their dealings with Stormont.
- (iv) So far as the Stormont regime is concerned, Mr. Hume fully anticipates that every effort will continue to be made by the Unionists to resist real reform, and they will clutch at any excuse to persuade the U.K. to go easy, including Ministerial statements here. Given this implacable characteristic, no Unionist Government can be trusted, and Mr. Hume's thoughts have now turned to the idea of a continuance of a Stormont Parliament but with a completely new form of administration, which would necessarily include representatives of the Opposition, e.g. an administration appointed by the Governor General. He has not worked out this idea and has nothing specific to put forward but his thinking runs along the line of a continuance of a representative Stormont Parliament but with something in the nature of a board of management drawn from the best talent in the House rather than a Party Government.
- (v) As a corollary to the continuance of a Stormont Parliament, conversations are proceeding between himself and other Stormont M.P's (Ivan Cooper and Austin Currie were mentioned) with the objective of creating a United Opposition. He is quite sure that Mr. Fitt will not agree to it, as Mr. Fitt prefers to continue to be a one-man band. I would feel that Mr. Hume is also conscious of the fact that a United Opposition would help to preserve his position and Mr. Ivan Cooper's position from attack from the Nationalist side in future elections. If a United Opposition is created, however, they will need financial support for a Headquarters Office and staff, and Mr. Hume wondered whether this could be obtained here. I let this query pass without reply.
- (iv) Mr. Hume is also thinking of a rather curious form of response to the Unionist demand that the minority should express loyalty to the Ulster Constitution. He points out that the 1920 Act, (re-stated in the 1949 Act), provides for the possibility of constitutional change if a Stormont Parliamentary majority so decides. The Ulster Constitution, therefore, is a temporary one to which the minority could perfectly consistently give temporary loyalty. Demands from the Unionist side that it should be considered to be perpetual ^{is} in fact "disloyal" to the plain meaning of the Westminster Acts. I wondered about whether he could explain this idea to the Bogside but it would not surprise me if Mr. Hume made some remarks to this effect in the near future, perhaps in Stormont. His objective may be to continue to distinguish the Civil-Rights movement from the Nationalist Party, and, for this purpose, the move has distinct values.
- (vii) Mr. Hume is worried about the Scarman Tribunal. Its terms of reference are such that its report on the events it is required to investigate may turn out badly for the minority.

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There is no doubt that the minority in many cases threw the first stones, and the terms of reference of the Scarman Tribunal may not satisfactorily permit an investigation of why they were thrown. He himself has given part of his evidence already but, contrary to what he believed to be the correct procedure, his partial evidence has ~~already~~ been shown by the solicitors of the Tribunal to Judge Scarman already. In these circumstances, he consulted his own solicitors, and they have advised him to give the rest of his evidence to them and they will submit it in proper form to the Tribunal's solicitors. Mr. Hume is also afraid that the fact that the Bogside called for support in Belfast and elsewhere during the events of August 12-13-14 will lead Scarman to blame the Falls Road, to a certain degree at least, for what happened there. On the other hand, as could be expected, Mr. Hume thinks well of the Cameron Commission and feels that its detailed descriptions of the events covered are remarkably accurate.

- (viii) Mr. Hume is very conscious of a need to dispute now the Faulkner boundaries in case they should be regarded as fair and honest. He has given me some details on this and I expect more information. We might consider pressing London ourselves on this ~~important~~ important matter. Mr. Oliver Wright will see Mr. Hume in Derry on Wednesday next (24th September) and this subject will be discussed.
- (ix) Mr. Hume commented that the intervention at the barricades by Dr. Philbin demonstrated the great poverty of political leadership in Belfast.

S. G. 22/9/69