

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



**Reference Code:** 2005/151/695

**Title:** Ulster Unionist Party news release relating to report by James H Molyneaux, Leader of the United Ulster Unionist Council at Westminster and MP for South Antrim on the coalition activities in the United Kingdom Parliament since October 1975

**Creation Date(s):** 17 January 1975

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 2 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Access Conditions:** Open

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Mr McCauley

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# NEWS RELEASE

RELEASE TIME: IMMEDIATE

17th JANUARY, 1975.

REPORT BY JAMES H. MOLYNEAUX, - LEADER OF THE  
U.U.U.C. AT WESTMINSTER AND MP. FOR SOUTH ANTRIM ON  
THE COALITION ACTIVITIES IN PARLIAMENT SINCE OCTOBER.

When the United Ulster Unionists returned to Westminster on 22nd October with their mandate renewed and their manifesto endorsed by an overwhelming vote, they very quickly set about organising themselves into a Parliamentary force to be reckoned with.

A new approach was made inevitable by the retirement of Capt. Orr with 25 years experience behind him and the loss of Mr. West who had led the Coalition with distinction in the last Parliament; while the addition of Mr. Powell had brought the team into the forefront of national and international affairs.

Members were quick to see that in the narrowly balanced new Parliament authority and influence would belong to a Party which displayed cohesion and unity of purpose.

With these considerations in mind the ten from Ulster decided their positions in the team. Mr. Molyneaux became leader with Mr. Craig and Mr. Paisley as deputies. Mr. Craig also accepted responsibilities for Home Office functions of the Northern Ireland Office and for Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Dr. Paisley became responsible for Defence and Security aspects of the Northern Ireland Office. With the United Kingdom facing an economic crisis the vitally important areas of Economic and Treasury Affairs and E.E.C. went to Mr. Powell. Mr. Bradford became Whip and spokesman for Trade and Industry, while Mr. McCusker in addition to Employment and Education accepted the new position of Parliamentary Business Secretary. With Mr. Dunlop at Environment, Mr. Carson at Health and Social Services, Mr. Kilfedder at Foreign and Commonwealth affairs, and Mr. Ross at the critical post of Agriculture, the team was ready to take the field.

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On the morning after the October election certain political commentators had discounted the United Ulster Unionists on the assumption that they would appear in London only when Northern Ireland business appeared on the Order Paper. They were in for a shock! They discovered that the ten obeyed their self-imposed rules and were refusing mid-week constituency engagements. It was noticed that from Monday to Friday, on Ulster days and non-Ulster days alike, they were playing a full part in United Kingdom debates. On many occasions they had a higher percentage attendance than any other party in the House.

Having thus made their initial impact, the United Unionists can look with confidence to their role in the vital months before, during and after the Constitutional Convention; for whatever may be said to the contrary, it is at Westminster that the ultimate political decisions rest. This is why Ulster Unionists are determined that Parliament shall not make the mistake of imposing on the Convention impossible pre-conditions, and will continue to warn of the folly of forcing upon our part of the Kingdom structures and practices which would be contrary to those established in the rest of it.

The main lines of the United Ulster Unionists case were, of course, put forward, and endorsed by an increased electoral majority, at the Parliamentary General Election in October, and it is on these lines that they will be seeking an equally or more decisive mandate in the Convention.

They themselves have decided that with the exception of the Party Leaders they will not seek election to the Constitutional Convention but they will regard it as a duty to keep in close contact with their United Unionist colleagues who will be putting forward in the Convention essentially the same claims and proposals as those on which they themselves were elected last October.

The United Unionists at Westminster will continue their work for fair representation in the Parliament of the United Kingdom - a claim which can no longer be denied; secondly, for the restoration of democracy in Local Government where, what the Queen's Speech called "some form of power sharing" worked successfully for many generations; and thirdly, for a middle layer of government which is consistent with these two claims and cannot be used to lessen or challenge the inalienable position of Ulster as an integral part of the United Kingdom.