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CONFIDENTIAL Comment on and
in relation with
SDLP
Mr.

23rd October 1975

Mr. Sean Donlon
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
DUBLIN 2

Dear Sean

Many thanks for your letter of 20th October enclosing a copy of the SDLP's draft report to the United Kingdom Parliament.

As I mentioned this morning, there is a suggestion, if not an argument, running through the document that the institutions of State here somehow need legitimisation - by way of a referendum over the whole island. This is expressed most strongly in the passage in the second last and last pages of the draft report containing the phrase, with supporting comment -

"The problem is the problem of legitimacy of all institutions in Ireland, North and South".

The Taoiseach strongly endorses the view that this idea is, to say the least of it, an anachronism. While the subject may have been live fifty years ago here it has no relevance today. It would be particularly unfortunate that the view should find expression in a report from the SDLP to the British Parliament. Would it be possible, without making too much fuss of it, to get these opinions across to the authors? They can make their points without raising in a formal submission arguments that are dead and gone here.

I may add that even from their own purely party point of view they would run into great difficulty in arguing for a referendum here if there were even a hint that one of the reasons for the referendum was that suggested in this passage.

The question of a referendum involving the whole island of course bristles with other difficulties which I have no doubt you see as clearly as anyone.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

