

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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nobody believes anyhow, nor of solemn promises in statutes or White Papers, which experience has too often taught us can be torn up overnight. It will be the result simply of living and working, from month to month and year to year, more and more as a single nation, with one barrier after another, which had been erected to separate and banish us from the Union, being silently and gradually eroded and dismantled.

Everything which happens, good or bad, right or wrong, in the United Kingdom finds its expression in Parliament. For all the scorn which is poured on it, and for all the unwise surrenders which it has been tricked or persuaded into making, the House of Commons is still the beating heart of political Britain: it feels and it transmits what is happening in the depths. In a way that has not been possible for over fifty years, the representatives of Northern Ireland have now become an integral part of the House of Commons. Few, much too few, though they still are in numbers, they have ceased to be second-class citizens. They are no longer a contingent of half-strangers, who appear from outside to complain, to demonstrate, to protest - or to acquiesce. They are part and parcel of the place, working from within. Indeed they take a much larger part in all its work and life than is proportionate to their numbers. In short, in the two years since the triple U Coalition swept the polls, and even more dramatically in these last weeks and months of so-called 'direct rule', Ulster Unionist MPs have become the living evidence of the reality and permanence of the Union.

It is that fact which the prime minister was instinctively recognising and expressing on the occasion that I have recalled. Everyone knows it and feels it. We are an integral part of Parliament because Ulster is an integral part of the United Kingdom. The two things can no more be separated than an object and its reflection can be separated; and as we are part of Parliament as the legislature, and of Parliament as 'the grand inquest of the nation', so we also take our part in the power-struggle which is also Parliament. It is a part which we take daily, almost hourly, with Ulster and its interests and its future, its safety and its place within the Union, never absent an instant from our minds.

Because all this is so, I tell you, as I have been telling you ever since I came amongst you and you made me an Ulsterman by adoption, that sooner or later we shall not, can not, be denied that total fairness and equal treatment in every respect with all our fellow citizens and with all parts of the United Kingdom, which we rightfully demand. Gradually and with patience and persistence, we shall see it meted out to us in full measure, "pressed down and running over". We ask it with the confidence of those who ask no more than justice, and ask it of our fellows in the name of the common heritage and institutions of which we no less than they are a part.

This then is the work which that 'band of brothers', the Ulster Unionist MPs, and your own Member among them, do; and for our success, and the rate at which we can succeed, we rely, like all representatives, upon the firmness of our base and the clarity of our mandate.



It was, as I have mentioned, the treble coalition, the U.U.U.C., which by its cohesion and its sweeping victory two years ago, saved Ulster and the Union in the nick of time from those who were leading this province over the precipice. That coalition comprised three distinct elements, with their respective leaders: the Official Unionists under Harry West; The Vanguard Unionists under William Craig; and the Democratic Unionists under Ian Paisley. When the Coalition success was repeated at the October 1974 election - except for the tragic but (I hope) temporary loss from Parliament of Harry West - the ten Coalition members, led by Jim Molyneaux comprised six Official Unionists, plus William Craig and two other Vanguard Unionists, plus the Rev. Ian Paisley, as sole but sufficient representative of D.U.F.

For good or ill, that treble U structure no longer exists, because the line which William Craig decided to take on the constitutional issue has separated him - albeit amicably - from his colleagues in Parliament and shattered his Party. The U.U.U.C., candidates of which we were elected eighteen months ago, has gone; for one of the three pillars is removed. What now exists is effectively a single group consisting of eight members - Jim Kilfedder having chosen from the start to operate separately as an independent - who act together vigorously and unitedly to fulfil the policies on which we were all elected; and perhaps I might be allowed to pay tribute to the contribution which Dr. Paisley's parliamentary skill and energy make to the effectiveness of that group.

What is intolerable, and a dangerous hindrance and embarrassment to the cause of Ulster in Parliament, is that here in the province certain individuals who possess no elective status or authority at all and had no lot or part in determining the Coalition mandate on which we were elected to Parliament, have now taken it upon themselves to make all manner of damaging and irresponsible pronouncements under the guise of the former but now no longer existing treble U.C. Since these people masquerade as U.U.U.s, the title by which we were elected to the House of Commons and by which in consequence we are still known in it. their crude and objectionable utterances cause grave confusion and are eagerly seized upon by our ill-wishers to try to discredit Ulster and undermine its political position in Parliament and in the United Kingdom. The result is to impede and prejudice what we are trying to achieve by use of the electoral responsibility and authority which you gave us.

I have long declared my conviction that the only lasting guarantee of the safety and well-being of Northern Ireland in this era lies in a single and united representation of the cause of the Union and in a single leadership of that cause, which shall be one and the same in Parliament and in Northern Ireland. Sooner or later all this will come about, because it has to come about.



Meanwhile we use our present, not inconsiderable, opportunities, and not without effect; and in this, we are always helped and reassured by the strength and dignity of our own chief, Harry West, whose calm and unruffled tenacity through these last difficult months have been the means of avoiding or undoing much of the harm that our cause would otherwise have suffered. Amid the tumult of foolish, intemperate and sometimes ill-motivated utterances we have reason to be proud that our leader's voice has been throughout the voice of moderation and of sanity.