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Secretary
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15/5/

For the Attention of Anglo-Irish Section

Please find enclosed, for your information, a copy of a speech made by Enoch Powell in Downpatrick on the 6th May. The speech was supplied to me by a press contact here.

In it, as will be seen, Powell stresses that the acceptance by the Government of the recommendations of the Speakers Conference on Representation in Northern Ireland reaffirms that Northern Ireland and Great Britain are "one nation".

Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh

Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh

Mr. Siro
To see, please.

F.X. O'W

10/5/78

Speech by the Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell MP, to the
Crossgar Branch of the South Down Unionist Association,
at the Orange Hall, Inch, Downpatrick,
8 pm Saturday, 6th May 1978

The virtually unanimous decision of Parliament to give Northern Ireland the same representation in the House of Commons as any other similar part of the United Kingdom has brought to a close one era and opened another. The era which it has brought to a close was an unhappy one: it was the era of successive attempts to thrust Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom altogether by conferring independence, under the guise of 'home rule', upon the island of Ireland as a whole. All these attempts had one thing in common: they ignored the 'Ulster dimension'. We have heard a great deal, a great deal too much, about the 'Irish dimension'. Little has been heard, and less understood, about the 'Ulster dimension', with consequences which have been tragic for Ulster and lamentable for the United Kingdom.

The 'Ulster dimension' was not something invented in the second half of the 19th century by those who opposed Gladstone's Home Rule bills and who would if necessary have resisted to the bitter end the Home Rule Act of Asquith. Long before that time the impossibility of Ulster being governed as part of an Irish state had been one of the axioms of statesmanship which those who had to do with Ireland learnt and proved by experience. The Ulster dimension did not even, as is commonly but ignorantly believed, begin with the plantations of the early seventeenth century. As far back as history goes, and further still, into pre history, Ulster was a separate entity, whose affinities (in every sense of that word) were more with the adjacent mainland, 14 miles away, than with the remainder of the island. This separateness was something which Ulster imposed upon those who dwelt in it rather than something which those who dwelt in it imposed upon Ulster.

It was this fact of life which condemned to eventual failure the successive attempts to force or trick the people of Ulster into an all-Irish state, and more recently the still more futile efforts, under the banner of an "Irish dimension", to erect institutions in Ulster whereby its people would bear allegiance and maintain loyalty to two separate and independent states at the same time. That there will and can be no repetition of these disastrous errors is guaranteed, so far as anything humanly can be guaranteed, by Parliament's recognition, for the first time, of the actual reality of the phrase, so often insincerely used in the past, that Ulster is an integral part of the United Kingdom. For the first time since 1920 the fact that Ulster and Great Britain are "one nation" has been affirmed, in deeds and not words, by the forum of the nation itself. It is time now to look to the positive aspect of "the Ulster dimension" - to turn from defence against what it is not to assertion of what it is.

Ulster is an integral part of the nation, like any other - that is accepted and proven - but it is not the only part of the nation which has its own "dimension". That is why to apply to the unconditional recognition of Ulster as an integral part of the nation ^{the term} 'integration', conveying as it does the overtones of uniformity and undifferentiation, is so gravely misleading, if not mischievous. There are other regional dimensions in Britain, profound, historic and self-conscious, which would be resistant to the suggestion that their integral and equal participation in the United Kingdom somehow represented effacement.

What has now to be done is to secure the same practical recognition of the 'Ulster dimension' as of Ulster's participation in the national unity. The existence since 1972 of a separate office of Secretary of State, answerable to Parliament like all other members of the government but identified with and responsible for Ulster, ought to be a valuable asset; and to be Secretary or Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland should in years to come be a legitimate

object of ambition for Ulster M.P.s, though not necessarily for Ulster M.P.s only. Unfortunately, the positive significance of the office is at present prejudiced by the fact that Ulster has been bereft since 1973 of the right to administer its own local affairs through its own elected representatives, a right which the rest of the United Kingdom takes for granted and which is one of the means whereby the other dimensions within the nation find expression.

It simply is absurd and intolerable to continue year after year with Ministers responsible to Parliament who are in day-to-day charge of matters which county councils and district councils ought to be administering and would administer better. I would not care to contemplate what we should hear from the Cornish or the Cumbrians, the Geordies or the Londoners, if their elected representatives had charge of nothing more than bus shelters and playing-fields, and everything else was controlled by Ministers sitting in Parliament. They would soon want to know what had happened to their dimension. There just is no substitute for local government by local people, locally elected and locally responsible. However, it is not only the administration of the law but the law itself which reflects and expresses the different dimensions within the nation.

It remains to be seen whether the concurrent legislative powers which the present government, against the sense of a majority in the House of Commons, is persisting in erecting in Scotland and in Wales can be made to work. Your Unionist representatives had the gravest misgivings, and joined with those who believe that this response to nationalism could undermine the Union itself in opposing this legislation and trying at least to remove its most objectionable features. Should the bills go through and run the gauntlet of the referenda, we shall have to see what happens. Meanwhile, Parliament can and does, as it always has done, legislate (where necessary) differently and specially for different parts of the U.K. For instance, Wales far back in the last century was given

a different, and in some ways superior, structure of education from that in the rest of the country.

We have a great task before us in securing that Ulster, while fully participating in the making of the laws by Parliament, can exert its full influence to see that in their application to Ulster they bear the imprint of "the Ulster dimension". The present dispensation whereby the government legislates for Northern Ireland by Order in Council is radically unsatisfactory, although, within its rigid limitations, both we and the government have co-operated to make it as responsive as possible to Ulster opinion and as open as possible to the processes of debate and amendment. In the end, however, there is no substitute for proper legislation by full parliamentary process. Only in this way can Ulster's representatives not only participate on an equal footing in framing the general policy of the country as a whole but also ensure its appropriate application to the province.

In a sense this objective is already implicit in the full parliamentary representation of Ulster, which restores the position as it existed before 1922, of one nation and one statute book, yet a statute book in which there was a place for the special requirements of the different parts of the Kingdom and for local adaptations of the general law. Thus the ending of direct rule, both in its denial of self-government and in its denial of proper law-making, is the work which lies before us. In a word, it represents the reassertion of the 'Ulster dimension' within the Union. It will be no quick or easy labour; but we can apply ourselves to it secure in the knowledge that what we seek cannot be denied by a Parliament which has voluntarily accorded to us that parity of status with our fellow-subjects from which all the rest must in reason and in justice follow.