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1. Mr. ~~Burke~~
To see pl.

2. Mr. R. Murphy

~~Mr. Adigan~~
Mr. ~~Whelan~~ Mr 10/7/80

To see pl.
Mr 18/8/80

17 July 1980

Dear ~~Ronan~~,
Mr 18/7/80

You may wish to have for your information the attached leaflet,
200,000 copies of which have been distributed to the public in
Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Daithi

Daithi O Ceallaigh
Press and Information Officer

Mr. Ronan Murphy
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs

NORTHERN IRELAND



The Government has now published proposals for the Government of Northern Ireland in the light of all the discussions it has held since coming into office.

Northern Ireland needs:

peace from terrorist violence and reconciliation under a settled framework of government, so that we can work together to rebuild our economy.

But to achieve these aims Northern Ireland needs workable and stable institutions.

Direct Rule has done a great deal for the Province. But it's only a second best. People want to be able to seek local political responsibility by election.

The divisions between the two communities in Northern Ireland have to be healed. So new institutions of Government need the support of both **majority** and **minority** communities. The Government can't force this on people so the will to work together must come from the people of Northern Ireland themselves.

The difficulty in the past has been that there is a deep division of view within Northern Ireland. Some people want the link with the United Kingdom to be preserved; some want the Province united with the Republic of Ireland. It's hard to reconcile these views. Under new political arrangements the majority community should feel confident that it will not be separated from the rest of the United Kingdom unless a majority agree; and the minority community feel they are free to pursue their own aspirations by peaceful means. A positive role for the minority community in arrangements for government in Northern Ireland is needed.

PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

What the Government is putting forward for discussion is:

- The Secretary of State will remain responsible for law and order, for considering the total public expenditure requirement in Northern Ireland and for a number of other functions.
- There should be an extensive transfer of functions to **an administration based on a single Province-wide Assembly**.
- Election to the Assembly should be the single transferable vote form of proportional representation.
- The new Assembly and an Executive body derived from it should have responsibility over a range of subjects — agriculture, commerce, education, employment, environmental matters, including housing, health and social services. Existing Northern Ireland Departments would thus come under the Executive's control.
- The Assembly would have power to legislate on these subjects.
- Day to day direction of Departments would be the responsibility of members of the Executive who would act as heads of the Departments.

- There would be Departmental Committees of the Assembly to scrutinise actions of the Executive and report to the Assembly.
- There would be an **Advisory Council** in which the Secretary of State would consult leading members of an elected Assembly on his responsibilities.
- Existing safeguards and remedies against discrimination should be maintained.

THE FORMATION OF THE EXECUTIVE

There are different ways of securing the participation of the minority community. One would be to provide that any party represented in the Assembly which won a certain proportion of the popular vote would have a proportionate number of seats in the Executive.

Another, that while minority representatives had no **guaranteed** place in the Executive, the power of the Executive would be balanced against that of another body composed of members of the Assembly in which the minority was assured of a prominent place.

To take the first alternative a proportional Executive could be provided by direct election. Or there could be a single election to the Assembly and the Executive could be formed by reference to the strengths of the parties in the Assembly. In these ways the Executive would reflect the overall wishes of the electorate.

But if this could not be agreed and if the Executive were to be formed from a party or parties with a majority in the Assembly, other means would have to be used to secure an effective degree of involvement of the minority community.

If the chairmanships and deputy chairmanships of the Departmental Committees were divided equally between members of the parties supporting the Executive and those opposing it, then the chairmen and deputy chairmen could together form a **Council of the Assembly**.

The powers of such a Council would be for discussion: to have real responsibility it would need to have some or all of the following powers:

- power to delay legislation;
- power to refer proposed legislation back to the Assembly or an outside appeals body;
- provision for the Council to approve all legislation and the public expenditure programme.

CONCLUSION

The Government urges all sections of the Northern Ireland community to consider and discuss the proposals with an open mind. The key question is: How shall the Executive be formed? Two methods are proposed but neither will work without broad support from people in both communities; no system of locally elected government can be imposed in the absence of such support. It is the Government's hope that agreement can be reached on a system of government which will contribute to peace, reconciliation, stability and economic reconstruction in Northern Ireland.