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Note

~~Mr. Boyle.~~
You may wish to see me?
Dec 18 Nov 83

~~CCPSM~~
PSS ✓
Wa. Hill ✓
File 13 #

13

Seamus Mallon, Deputy Leader of the SDLP, called to see me at home over the weekend. He had been detained in Dublin because his sister had had a heart attack here.

Speaking of the political situation in Northern Ireland he said that it is now too late for a power-sharing solution within Northern Ireland and it would not be advantageous for the SDLP to fight an election on powersharing.

He was clearly of the view that the momentum of Provisional Sinn Féin, built up as a result of their successes in recent elections, continues and he gave the impression that the PSF tide is unstoppable.

He said the Forum for a New Ireland should be seen as providing a scenario for a British withdrawal and that a British declaration to withdraw should also be seen from the beginning as being the immediate next step following the adoption of the Forum's report. Any offers or concessions which might be made to the Unionists should be made contingent on agreement for a British withdrawal. He argued against the making of any concessions per se to the Unionists. As regards membership of the Forum he thought the SDLP needed a minimum of ten full membership places.

He thought the SDLP might take two seats at the next Westminster election, with Foyle going to John Hume and Newry-Armagh being won by himself. West Belfast will go to Gerry Adams (PSF). There is an outside chance in South Down for Eddie McGrady.

Mr. Mallon was by no means certain that he will win the seat. He said he needed 19/20,000 votes to be certain. He was sure of 9,000 in Upper Armagh, where he himself is strong, but he was less sure of Newry, which is Frank Feeley's area, and of South Armagh, where Paddy O'Hanlon is based.

In terms of that election he didn't attach a great deal of importance to the establishment of the Forum for a New Ireland. He does not intend to fight the election on ideas and on principles but more on personality and organisation and he will stress his constituency record over the years and the inexperience of PSF.

Daithí Ó Ceallaigh

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18 April 1983