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Discussions with Seamus Mallon MP

The following were the main points to emerge in a discussion with Seamus Mallon on 14 September:

IRA cessation/Adams

- he remains angry at Hume's handling of arrangements for the meeting with Adams at Government Buildings on 6
 September. He had objected strongly to Hume over his proposal that this meeting precede the meeting with SDLP representatives, and made clear that he disbelieved claims by Hume that written assurances had been given to Adams that his meeting would have priority. He had no criticism to make of the Government on this issue, reserving his ire for the party leader;
- his concern over the meeting with Adams reflects a wider anxiety at what he sees as lack of attention by Hume to the interests of the SDLP, and a tendency to forget that they are in competition with Sinn Fein for the support of the nationalist community;
- while he does not anticipate any significant loss of votes, or members, to Sinn Fein, he expects there will be pressure for unity candidates at the next Westminster election. In his view the SDLP must continue to run its own candidates, and he would not be prepared to endorse a unity ticket;
- he said that so far the IRA/Sinn Fein network in South
 Armagh showed no sign of bucking the Adams line. However
 he feared that Adams has over-sold the likely gains from
 the political process, and there was bound to be
 disillusionment and restiveness when this realization

became more widespread;

Forum

- Mallon commented that there had as yet been no detailed discussion within the party on its approach to the Forum, but there were obvious dangers ahead;
- as he saw it Adams' objective would be to "narrow the gap" between the Hume/Adams document and the Joint Declaration. He noted as relevant the reference to the inadequacies of the Declaration in the IRA statement of 31 August, and Adams' comment declining comparison with Michael Collins (when going into Government Buildings), on the grounds that Collins had failed to resolve partition. Adams would be seeking to remedy these deficiencies;
- while he noted the emphasis on the Forum as a consultative, rather than negotiating, body, the Sinn Fein instinct would be to work towards a comprehensive concluding document. This trend would be difficult to resist.
- in terms of his own participation in the Forum he was conscious of the danger of being painted as a spoiler by Sinn Fein; he was particularly emphatic that he would not allow himself to be presented as aligned with opposition figures such as John Bruton and Michael McDowell.

Policing

he said that the party had no choice but to respond as it did to the controversy over Francie Rocks' appointment to the Police Authority. The credibility of its policy on policing was at issue. However he had resisted efforts to dump the problem on him, and insisted if was a matter for the Party Executive to resolve. He acknowledged ruefully that party councillors were not immune to NIO

blandishments, helped in at least two cases by the granting of OBEs. reflecting on Sinn Fein efforts, as he saw it, to hi-jack the policing issue he commented sourly on the failure to take action on this issue in the past few years. concerned that political benefits from any gains which may now be made will accrue only to Sinn Fein. there had as yet been no sign of the "flying columns" promised by local Sinn Fin Councillor McAllister to monitor security force behaviour. He noted that since the cessation barriers had been removed in Newry, Armagh and Markethill. The Army in Crossmaglen seemed to be trying particularly hard to be "friendly" but local reaction remained muted. he noted that the Inter-Parliamentary Body would shortly begin work on a report on policing, but given the composition on the British side (King, Orme etc.) he was not optimistic about the outcome. the situation in Newtownhamilton where the Army are rebuilding the base remained guiet, with very few complaints. It seemed that offers of compensation, and some lessons learned by the security forces from Crossmaglen, had done the trick. * Economic Issues he had been told by a contact on the board of Northern-Ireland Railways that Newry had been dropped from a station re-development plan, which also included Belfast (Central Station?) and Portadown. He was uncertain of the attitude of the holding company, but there were also difficulties with DoE and the Stormont Department of Finance. He has asked for an urgent meeting with Minister Tim Smyth. The issue has also been raised ©TSCH/2021/96/4

through the Secretariat.

he had asked John McGuckian of IDB for a meeting with Newry Enterprise to discuss inward investment. He was annoyed at a response from IDB, apparently in McGuckian's absence, that he deal with LEDU. He was hopeful the issue could be resolved on McGuckian's return, but if not he would have to raise it on the adjournment in the Commons.

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P. Hennessy

// September, 1994

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