

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Telephone Call from Bill Jeffrey

1. Bill Jeffrey telephoned this afternoon to say that he and the Secretary of State met Séamus Mallon at lunchtime. Mallon was in a black and intransigent mood. He is determined to move ahead with his wish to have the Departments approved by the Assembly next week. However, he will take no part whatsoever in finding a formula that would allow these to be approved while deferring the activation of the d'Hondt formula on the establishment of the Shadow Executive.

2. Mallon seems to believe that Trimble is taking a particularly hard line at present because he sees an opportunity of attracting the dissident UKUP Assemblymen into the UUP. He also suspects that Trimble is cooking something up with the Prime Minister. Conversely, Trimble apparently feels that Mallon and Mo Mowlam are working hand in hand in advance of Monday.

3. Jeffrey said that, while the Secretary of State is utterly opposed to any agreement with Trimble which would allow the activation of the standing order on d'Hondt to be deferred, John Holmes was more open to the suggestion. I pointed out that Sinn Féin were completely opposed to this step and had referred to its possibility as "disastrous". It would, they argue, place the timing of the establishment of the Shadow Executive almost completely in Trimble's hands.

4. I said, and Jeffrey agreed, that a stand-off next week appeared almost inevitable. In response to my question, he was unsure whether a report could be introduced by Trimble and Mallon on the pre-Christmas Agreement which did not contain a motion or resolution. In any event, one or more of the parties would table a resolution. In the circumstances, and if there was no

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certainty about the deferral of d'Hondt, the UUP would abstain and the motion would fall.

5. As you know, I am travelling to Belfast this evening, and will report further either later tonight or tomorrow.

DAT.

Dermot Gallagher

12 January 1999

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