

Received this morning. not acknowledged.

Jim

EDENDERRY,
CAW,
LIMAVADY ROAD,
LONDONDERRY.

25th February, 1965.

Dear Prime Minister,

Second University for Northern Ireland.

Your kindly letter of 19th February, 1964, encourages me to take the liberty of writing to you on a subject with which you must be thoroughly weary. I write without the knowledge of my Council and I do not know whether the views which I express herein would be acceptable to my Council or not. For that reason I write from my home address and not from the Guildhall. I do, however, hope that you may find it possible to give some thought to the purely personal opinions which I am expressing.

You will be aware that since your recent discussions with the Prime Minister of the Republic political tensions in Londonderry have eased very considerably. I form the impression that local members of the Nationalist Party are going to great lengths to encourage this easing of tensions. It may be that they are doing so because they sincerely believe such a course to be in the best interests of this City. They may on the other hand have completely different reasons - who knows? However, whatever the reasons may be, the fact is that the Nationalists in Londonderry - particularly those who are members of the Corporation - appear to have joined wholeheartedly with the Unionists in presenting a united City and a united claim for the establishment of a University in Londonderry. If the claim is successful much good may ensue locally not only socially, economically and culturally but also perhaps politically. If on the other hand the claim fails I foresee very great difficulties for Londonderry - difficulties which are bound to have repercussions throughout the Province. If in addition the Joint Anti-Submarine School at H.M.S. Sea Eagle should wind up then I shudder in contemplation of the consequences. Those consequences could conceivably follow a pattern something like this :-

- (a) Local Unionists and Nationalists work together to establish a University at Londonderry;
- (b) The effort fails;
- (c) Disillusioned Nationalist leaders either resign or are discarded by their disillusioned followers;
- (d) Sinn Fein or other extreme elements take control of the local Nationalist people;
- (e) Many Unionists become disillusioned and cynical also with results which can only be guessed at;
- (f) Violence would not be an impossibility.

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I appreciate that no Government can easily retreat from a policy which it has already expressed in a White Paper such as Cmd. 480. There is, however, in the fifth paragraph of that White Paper a sentence from which great good might come by way of a compromise :- "..... the Government proposes to investigate further whether (Magee) College can be incorporated in the new University"

As a result of that investigation it might be found possible to create two University Colleges, one in or near Londonderry City, the other in or near Coleraine. Those two Colleges could have three or four faculties and, say, 3,000 students each and the Londonderry College could be capable in due course of embodying a medical school in collaboration with Altnagelvin Hospital. Both colleges could be incorporated as the "University of Londonderry".

If a compromise such as this were to be adopted both Londonderry and Coleraine would be well pleased; the Government would have dealt diplomatically with a thorny problem (didn't Solomon suggest that the child should be cut in two); the Member of Parliament for Londonderry could regard the solution as fair and the political climate in Londonderry could continue to improve.

As I said earlier the views which I express herein are entirely my own. The fact that I am not a Derryman myself may have some bearing on those views (my early years were spent in Carrickfergus, Belfast and Omagh). I am conscious that I am not experienced in politics; I am, however, equally conscious that 50 years ago the experienced politicians of the day failed to contain the Easter Rising of 1916.

I do hope that what I have written above may be of some value to you. I fear that I may not have expressed my thoughts very lucidly. If you would like me to amplify this letter in any way I will be happy to do so. Please regard me as being at your service.

Needless to say I have no intention of making the contents of this letter public.

Yours truly,

Ray Henderson

Captain The Rt. Hon. Terence O'Neill, D.L., M.P.,
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