

NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND MR FAULKNER  
IN STORMONT CASTLE ON 18 DECEMBER 1973

## PRESENT:-

Secretary of State

Mr Faulkner

Mr Cooper

Mr McNeill

The following points were discussed.

1. Mr Faulkner said that it was essential to have some movement on the law and order front as far as the South of Ireland was concerned. The majority population in Northern Ireland was concerned about a Council of Ireland but if they could see some sign that the Eire Government had good intentions this would help. He had a letter from Mr Corish asking for a meeting to discuss the Executive functions of the Council of Ireland. He had declined on the grounds that none of the Executive was appointed as yet. The Secretary of State said that there was movement towards the establishing of the Commission to look at Common Law Enforcement. Mr Cooper said that officials from the Attorney-General's Department were going to Dublin for discussions. This fact will be made public. The Ambassador in Dublin was also in dialogue about this. Mr Faulkner said he had hoped that this Commission might have at least given an interim report before a formal conference was arranged again. The Secretary of State said he would reply to Mr Cosgrave's speech at the weekend by saying how significant was the declaration on Northern Ireland's position by the Eire Government at Sunningdale.
2. There was a discussion about the merits of having a ceremony on 31 December to mark devolution. It was agreed that warrants of appointment would be handed over by the Secretary of State publicly. Mr Faulkner said he would sound out Mr Fitt on the merits of having the Oath administered by the Lord Chief Justice or, alternatively, by three High Court Judges though this ceremony would not be done publicly.
3. Mr Faulkner said that the present security situation justified no more than minimal releases of detainees at this stage. The figure, he thought, would be about 50. HMG must be careful not to give extreme Protestants the opportunity for a violent reaction.
4. Mr Faulkner also pointed out that the SDLP must make an announcement to call for the end of the rent and rates strike before the Executive formally took up office.

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5. When the Executive was formed Mr Faulkner hoped to have close links with the Secretary of State. He would prefer, however, that any business which the Executive had with the Northern Ireland Office should be channelled through him. He intended to continue with the present practice of having the Permanent Secretaries of the Northern Ireland Departments meet each week and they would meet under his Chairmanship.

~~IS~~

D G McNEILL  
Private Secretary  
20 December 1973

Copies to:-

Mr van Straubenzee  
Mr Howell  
Mr Mills  
Lord Belstead  
Mr Cooper  
Sir David Holden  
Mr Woodfield  
Sir Harold Black  
Mr Smith  
Mr Bloomfield  
Mr Howard-Drake  
Mr D Payne  
Mr D Howe  
Mr Trevelyan  
Mr J Allan  
Mr Jordan  
Mr C E Goddard  
Mr A R Marsh  
Mr D G Allen  
Mr J Lawrence  
Mr Williams  
Mr Roberts  
Mr Stevens (2)

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