

Jc4675

CONFIDENTIAL

W Chatter

5/22

E. R.

PA 151/79

LONDON COPIES BY MUFAX

Mr. Gee

- c.c. PS/Secretary of State (I&B) - M
- PS/Junior Ministers (I&B) - M
- PS/PUS (I&B) - M
- PS/Sir R. Kidd
- Mr. Janes (L) - M
- Mr. Hannigan
- Mr. Lane
- Mr. Marshall (L) - M
- Mr. Burns
- Mr. Newington FCO/RID(L) - M
- Mr. Wilson (L) - M
- Mr. Cowan (L) - M
- Mr. Buxton (L) - M
- Mr. Clift
- Mr. Gilliland
- M- Mr. Culham MOD DS.10 Main Bldg
- Miss Simmons NIO(DH)

W. Palfrey
W. G. G. G.
Mr. T. Walker
11/6.

EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Elections to the European Assembly will be held on Thursday 7 June and, following so closely on the Westminster general election, the results in Northern Ireland will be a further useful indicator of the electoral strength of the main NI political parties.

2. Northern Ireland is being treated as a single constituency electing 3 Euro-MPs by PR(STV) - unlike GB where the voting will be on the first ^{part} the post system. The count will begin on Monday 11 June and the results are likely to be known late the following day. Nominations closed on Saturday 12 May, with 13 candidates putting forward their names:

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP):

- Harry West
- John Taylor

Social & Democratic Labour Party (SDLP):

- John Hume

Alliance Party (AP):

- Oliver Napier

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP):

- Ian Paisley

Republican Clubs-The Workers Party (RC-WP):

- Brian Brennan
- Francis Donnelly

P235

E. R.

Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (UPNI):

Eddie Cummings

United Labour Party (ULP):

Paddy Devlin

Ulster Liberal Party:

James Murray

United Community Candidate:

David Bleakley

Independent Unionist:

Jim Kilfedder

Independent Republican:

Bernadette McAliskey (nee Devlin)

The election will therefore be fought by representatives of nearly all the main political groupings in Northern Ireland, except the United Ulster Unionist Party (UUUP) which decided at their last party conference not to contest the EEC elections on grounds of principle, the Irish Independence Party (IIP) because of pressure on their funds, and Provisional Sinn Fein (PSF) who are urging a boycott.

3. With so many candidates in the contest, predictions are difficult, but most commentators are confident that one of the 3 seats will go to a UUP candidate (probably Harry West), with Hume, Taylor, Paisley and Napier in the ring for the other two. Most expect Hume to gain a seat and many think that Paisley will do well, particularly after the general election result. It remains to be seen what effect the candidature of Kilfedder, Paddy Devlin and Bernadette McAliskey have on the Unionist and anti-Unionist vote respectively.

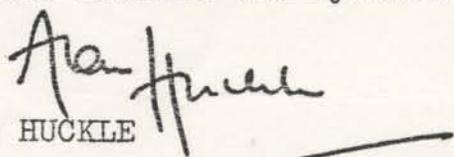
4. To a large extent the election will reflect normal party alignments rather than EEC issues, although undoubtedly there will be an anti-EEC vote. In the referendum in 1975, NI voted by only a narrow majority (52.1%) in favour of membership compared with the 67.2% in GB. All the candidates, including those standing on a pro-EEC ticket, have called for changes in

the terms of membership and/or major alterations to EEC policies, particularly the CAP.

5. Paisley is the main anti-EEC candidate on the Unionist side. The DUP urged a 'NO' vote in the referendum and Paisley has promised to stop the intrusion of "interfering bureaucrats" into matters affecting the sovereignty of the UK. The UUP have campaigned for full representation but for major changes in EEC policy. They took a neutral stance in the referendum because of a significant divergence of view on the issue of membership within the party's rank and file. Their two candidates have split the Province in two for campaigning purposes and it is possible that, if elected, Harry West will resign from the party leadership. Kilfedder who voted 'NO' in the referendum is campaigning on a devolution ticket and is probably using the election to test the strength of support for his traditional Unionist views.

6. The Alliance Party is strongly pro-Europe as are the SDLP and the RC-WP. Anti-marketeters on the non-Unionist side who may take first preference votes away from the SDLP are Paddy Devlin and Bernadette McAliskey - the latter may poll well west of the Bann with her 'Brits Out' campaign, and she has already drawn the support of Frank Maguire MP. Much will depend, however, on the transfers. The other candidates are unlikely to do well and their votes may possibly tend to go towards Alliance on transfer.

7. An assessment of the results of the election will be prepared by Miss Ireland and myself.


A.E. HUCKLE

Division 3(B)

14 May 1979

3B/15546/MR

- 3 -

CONFIDENTIAL