

E.R.

CONFIDENTIAL

① Sir Ewart
② POL
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PAB/575/RE

cc: PS/S of S (I&B)
PS/PUS (I&B)
Sir E Bell ✓
Mr Marshall
Mr Chesterton
Miss MacGlashan

Mr Wyatt

UUP MANOEUVRINGS

1. Yesterday evening I spoke to David Trimble of the UUP. He is a leading member of the UUP devolutionist group, a candidate for the South Belfast nomination and one of the small group drafting the proposals for Mr Paisley's Devolutionist Forum.

The UUP and Constitutional Development

2. Trimble said that Sir George Clark had, as we suspected, been converted over the past few weeks from the Molyneaux viewpoint (neither of us mentioned the Secretary of State's visit to Sir George on Monday, and I do not know whether Trimble is aware of it). Mr Molyneaux had been trying hard to prevent next Monday's meeting with the UUP from taking place. However, Sir George had "put his foot down" and the latest news that day was that the meeting was to go ahead. The Executive meeting was still scheduled for Friday, and the odds were that the same delegation as before would be authorised to see the Secretary of State. However, they were most unlikely to be authorised to enter into constructive discussions: at most, they would refrain from condemning the Secretary of State's ideas and promising to wreck them.

3. Trimble knew of the ideas the Secretary of State had put to the UUP (I suspect via McCusker). I went over them again. His view, for what it is worth, was that UUP members would find it difficult to stay aloof, even if Molyneaux tried to persuade them to do so. He stressed the importance of being seen to consult the DUP. UUP members were already wary of being courted by Stormont. If Paisley were able to accuse the UUP of being quislings, there would be pressure inside the UUP to call off the discussions with the Government.

Devolution Forum

4. Trimble confirmed that the programme of the Devolution Forum was for the draft to be put to Forum members about 1 February; for a meeting to be held to approve it on 6 February; and for publication about 13 February. The result would almost certainly be a restatement

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c. the Convention Report recommendations, with one or two gestures towards minority participation which we would find inadequate. However, he doubted it would cause much stir: the whole exercise was little more than an attempt by Paisley to appear constructive. Eyes were now focussed on what the Government was brewing.

South Belfast

5. Martin Smyth was almost certain to get the UUP nomination, which would be disastrous for the UUP. If Smyth then won the by election, Molyneaux's integrationist and 'do nothing' supporters in the party would be able to say there was no need to go down the devolutionist path. If he lost to the DUP, the same elements would be even less willing than now to take risks over devolution. As for Bob McCartney, Trimble described a meeting last week at which the former had been introduced to a number of members of the constituency selection committee. He had told them what a fine and successful fellow he was, how he hoped to reach the top in politics, and how this would leave him no time for eg running the constituency clinics Robert Bradford had nurtured. He had made a terrible impression which had got about.

Kincora

6. Trimble noted glumly that all the dirt to come out was likely to stick to the UUP. All the DUP members involved had since joined the UUP.



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