

E.R.

PAB/342/DP

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

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cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Patten (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Bloomfield
Mr Brennan
Mr Stephens
Mr Burns
Mr Buxton
Mr Merifield
Mr Ferneyhough
Mr Carvill
Mr Gilliland
Mr Abbott
Mr Reeve
Mr Lyon
Mr Gavin Hewitt
Mr Coulson
Mr Nigel Hamilton, DOE
Mr Bickham

23 JAN 1985
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VISIT TO LONDONDERRY - 17 JANUARY 1985

I accompanied Mr Reeve on a visit to Londonderry where we met the following people.

a) Jim Guy, Ulster Unionist Councillor

Mr Guy, who met us at Altnagelvin Hospital where he works, was very worried by the motion before the council asking for a plaque to be erected in the Guildhall to commemorate those who died on 'Bloody Sunday'.

He is hopeful that some sort of compromise will be reached which will not cause undue embarrassment to his party in the run up to the local government elections in May when they hope to run on a 'participation in council' platform. Mr Guy will be running in his old ward in the Waterside contrary to earlier rumours that he would be running in the new Cityside ward.

When discussing the May elections Mr Guy told us he was concerned that the party leadership was not as worried as it should be about those councils where unionists could lose their control - he mentioned Omagh, Fermanagh and Limavady as being among seven where he believes this is possible.

He asked if Mr Patten was opening the extension to the hospital could an opportunity be provided for him to meet the current Ulster Unionist councillors (four including himself) so that the

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name change issue can be laid finally to rest. Gregory Campbell is still campaigning on the basis that it is possible to change the present situation by pressurising the Government.

Comment

Mr Guy is not overly optimistic about prospects for his party in the forthcoming election. He talked in terms of two or three successes but not with any real conviction.

It should be possible to manufacture an opportunity to allow a meeting such as proposed by Mr Guy provided that it is not seen that Mr Patten is making a special trip or has made special provision for such a meeting.

b) Colm Geary, Town Clerk, John Tierney, Mayor

During our discussion the following points of interest arose;

- (1) Plaque - Mr Geary is obviously quite worried about the effect of a commemorative plaque of the sort proposed by Councillor Bradley of the Irish Independence Party. He was most willing to discuss with us and the Mayor the possibility of a non-controversial plaque such as one to commemorate all innocent victims of the troubles. The Mayor is now thinking along these lines and, I suspect, will lead the council towards this conclusion insofar as he is able. Mr Geary will let us know the outcome.
- (2) Rossville Flats - Mr Tierney is anxious that he is afforded an opportunity of meeting Mr Patten as soon as a final decision is taken in relation to these flats.
- (3) Plaques - We return to the sad saga of plaques - Mr Tierney enquired about the plaques which are to be erected in the Richmond Centre and on the Foyle Bridge.

Comment

We agreed to pass on the Mayor's requests at (2) and (3) - he is trying to steal a march on Sinn Fein over the Rossville Flats in that he will be seen to have had a hand in the outcome which he believes will be along the lines proposed by SDLP.

Councillor Bill Keys - SDLP

Councillor Keys is manager of Enterprise House in Londonderry and he is heavily involved with various schemes for the provision of employment through this medium. He is well recognised as a good community worker and someone who is admired in the area.

During our discussion he told us he was very disillusioned with the Derry City Council which he believes is being led by the nose by Sinn Fein as witnessed by recent events including the name change issue. One of his remarks at that time was that the council should spend more time talking about 'the good name of this City rather than the name of this good City'. His attitude on these matters has not endeared him to other SDLP councillors and while he still believes in SDLP principles he will not be seeking re-election in May.

Comment

We have had other people speak to us about Councillor Keys and there is no doubt that his assessment of his position within SDLP is on a par with their views. We suspect however that he may decide to run as an Independent if he feels that he will get the support of the electorate.

d) Mark Durkan and Pat Hume

We called at John Hume's office and had a fairly lengthy discussion on local issues all of which have been covered before.

e) Bishop Edward Daly

We had a wide ranging discussion during which the following points of interest arose;

- (1) The Bishop said that he had been dismayed and depressed following the Summit though these feelings related more to the press conferences than to the actual content of the statement.

Since November he believes that there have been considerable efforts on both sides to recover what he sees as lost ground and while he is not optimistic he is more hopeful

that more progress will be made in the next Summit.

- (2) He was clearly very pleased at the recent movement in SOSP and Life Sentence cases and asked if he could have a copy of the booklet which issued today (sent 21 January 1985).
- (3) While discussing the security forces he mentioned that he had had a very good working relationship with former police and army chiefs. He went on to say that the only contact he has had recently was with Mr Turkington, RUC, and then only a visit in relation to one specific incident. He was clearly keen that these contacts be re-established.

Comment

The Bishop believes that the meeting with the Secretary of State on the 3 December had an effect on the Secretary of State's thinking and from our contacts this is a view held in common with the others present at that meeting.


J E McCONNELL
Political Affairs Division
22 January 1985