

E.R. PAB/608/DP

Mr Pearson  
Central Secretariat

cc: Mr Merifield  
Mr Reeve  
Miss Elliott  
Mr Hamilton (DOE)  
Mr Pinkerton (ESL)  
Mr J Stephens

30 APR 1985  
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DERRY CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION: THE HONOURABLE THE IRISH SOCIETY

I took the opportunity, while in Londonderry on 22 April 1985 to discuss the above resolution with Mark Durkan and Pat Hume (SDLP). They are not councillors but they are aware of the background and the feeling about the Honourable the Irish Society.


The motion was proposed by Mr Fergus McAteer (IIP) and, despite protestations to the contrary, as Jonathan Stephens says in his minute there is a strong element of electioneering in this move.

However there is also resentment in the nationalist community that an organisation, which is perceived to be British through and through, should have such a strong influence in the day-to-day life of the City. Payment of ground rents is a particular gripe.

I asked about money which the Society puts back into the community and the response was:

- (a) the people should not have to rely on patronage and
- (b) Coleraine, according to Durkan, fares much better than Londonderry from any monies which are returned to the Province by the Society.

I feel that the heat will go out of this motion after the election and I support Mr Stephen's view that a reply is held until after 15 May.

  
J E McConnell  
Political Affairs Division  
25 April 1985

MR W. W. W. 30/4  
To send return M

Mr Hamilton st  
I directed CPL Division to David White who has a wealth of information, background material & personal knowledge of the Hon. the Irish Society. We have nothing to usefully contribute to any draft reply - the matter did not come up during the Comg. ~~issue~~ name change issue 29/4