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cc Sir Frank Cooper ✓
Mr Janes
Mr England ✓
Mr Leahy ✓
Mr Trevelyan
Mr Waterfield

DUS/ 3 / 1568
N.I.O.
BELFAST
DATE: 3/16

SECRETARY OF STATE: ✓

DISSOLVING THE CONVENTION

In your minute of 1 March to the Prime Minister you forecast that if the Convention appeared to be acting irresponsibly, then a Privy Council should be held at the earliest opportunity, so that an Order in Council might be made dissolving the Convention as soon as possible.

Provisional arrangements have already been made for the Privy Council to meet at 6.30 pm on Thursday: and a draft Order in Council has been prepared. May we take it please that in the light of yesterday's debate in the Convention you now wish to go ahead with the immediate dissolution of the Convention?

If you do, then we will -

- (i) firm up the arrangements for a meeting of the Privy Council on Thursday evening;
- (ii) submit to you this evening a draft Order in Council for your approval: only after the text has been approved by you can it be submitted to the Privy Council.

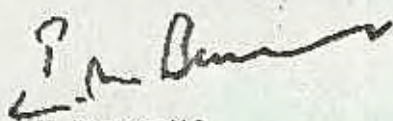
It is proposed, if you agree, that the Order should dissolve the Convention as from the beginning of Saturday March 5th. It would be possible in theory for the Convention to be dissolved 24 hours earlier, at the beginning of Friday 5th March, but if the announcement of the dissolution is not to be made until 11 am on Friday 5th March, you could be criticised for making what was in effect a retrospective announcement of the dissolution. It seems essential to give Convention members, and others, some notice (however short) of dissolution, and a statement on Friday followed by dissolution at the beginning of Saturday would achieve this. If you agree, the draft Order submitted for your approval this evening will therefore provide for dissolution on Saturday 6 March.

If you agree with these proposals the timetable would now be:

- Wednesday evening - approve the draft Order in Council
- Thursday, 6.30 pm ^{meeting of the Privy Council} at which the Order in Council is made. (The Privy Council Office have asked if you could be one of the Privy Counsellors present at this meeting.)
- Friday morning - your letter to the Chairman, announcing the dissolution of the Convention, and sending him an advance copy of your statement, is delivered.

- 11 am statement in the House of Commons
- midnight - Convention dissolved.

May we so proceed please?



I M BURNS
3 March 1976