

Ref: 010-MINS/D1/AMOK

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIVES GROUP, HELD  
PARTY HEADQUARTERS, WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 1991

- 1.1 Attendance: Joe Hendron (Chair), John Hume, Seamus Mallon, Eddie McGrady, Sean Farren, Patsy McGlone, Jonathan Stephenson, Gerardine Leonard, Alban Maginness, Dorita Field, Angela Hegarty, Brid Rodgers, Tommy Gallagher, Alasdair McDonnell, Frank Feeley and Denis Haughey.
- 1.2 Apologies: Mark Durkan and Donovan McClelland.
- 2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted on a proposal of Alasdair McDonnell, seconded by Brid Rodgers.
- 3.1 Matters Arising: Regarding the issue of clarification received by the Unionist leaders on Mr Brooke's final document, John Hume reported that he had raised the issue with Mr Brooke and the Dublin Government and Brooke had stated that his clarification made no change to the text of his document.
- 3.2 The Party Leader John Hume reported on a meeting held with the Heads of the Civil Service regarding the current Talks. The meeting discussed the mechanism for the Talks, venue, delegates etc. John then reported that a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference would take place on the 26th of April, which would announce the gap in Conference meetings during which the Talks would take place. The Talks would commence Tuesday, 30th April and were scheduled to run for ten weeks at four days per week. The venue suggested by the Northern Ireland Office was Parliament Buildings in a Conference room. The SDLP team suggested Stormont Castle, this was yet to be agreed.
- 3.3 Numbers in delegations: The NIO proposed three delegates from each Party, the SDLP had suggested four from each Party plus four substitutes who would be in attendance at every meeting. The Party Leader requested of the Constituency Representatives as to who would not be able to attend the Talks for a period of ten weeks and devote approximately four days per week to those Talks. Those not able to do this were to notify John.
- 3.4 Other parties to the Talks had suggested payment for their participation. The SDLP had opposed this saying it was totally wrong. Once clarification had been given on these issues then Mr Brooke would meet each Party to request of them the principal concerns to be discussed. Seamus Mallon suggested an early meeting with the Dublin Government to agree policy and strategy with them. John elaborated that he had sought a meeting with the Taoiseach Charles Haughey and that the Department of Foreign Affairs had offered to put at our disposal staff who would be in a position to research issues.

3.5 Brid Rodgers referred to the other Dublin parties and John Hume outlined how to date we had kept them briefed on progress throughout the Talks process. A discussion took place in which Alasdair McDonnell, Joe Hendron, Frank Feeley and Sean Farren participated.

3.6 On our approach to the Talks, John said that firstly what we would do was define exactly what the problem was and that we use as the basis for that the Forum Report. He then went on to discuss the political options open to us.

3.7 Eddie McGrady referred to the need for a close liaison with the Dublin Government and informing and briefing the opposition parties as to what was going on. He said that it was furthermore imperative that during the course of the Talks that we have daily contact with the Irish Government representatives, and that within the Party that all local organisations be fully briefed as to what is on-going.

3.8 John Hume suggested preparation of a Paper which he undertook to do in consultation with Seamus, Eddie and Joe, which would outline in discussion form our approach to the Talks. This would be further discussed at a meeting of the Constituency Representatives Group, which would be held on Saturday 20th April, at 10.30 am in Party Headquarters.

3.9 A discussion followed on:

- (1) What if any the structures of administration for Northern Ireland would be?
- (2) What its relationship with the rest of Ireland would be?
- (3) How we arrive at an agreed system of justice and law and order?

In which S Mallon, Eddie McGrady, Dorita Field, Sean Farren, Frank Feeley and Denis Haughey participated.

3.10 A discussion then took place as to what the Unionists perceptions of the current situation are and what the Unionist leadership would have on offer during the Talks. Denis Haughey, Frank Feeley, John Hume and Seamus Mallon participated.

4.1 Any Other Business: John Hume referred to a letter which he had received from the Progressive Democrats asking for an SDLP representative to be present to address part of their Conference on Northern Ireland. Other representatives from various political parties had been invited to do likewise. The Conference would take place on the 27th of April. John undertook to reply to this saying that to participate in such a debate at their Conference would not be seen as facilitating the overall process of Talks in the North.

These matters discussed the meeting concluded.