

RECORD OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 1992

Government Team

Mr Hanley
Mr Bell
Mr Hill

Alliance Party

Mr Close
Mr Morrow

UDUP

Mr Robinson
Mr Vitty

Talks Secretariat

Mr Smith

SDLP

Mr Farren
Mr Haughey

UUP

Mr Empey
Mr Donaldson

Also Present

Mr Smyth

The meeting began at 16.40 and finished at 17.15.

2. The meeting discussed and agreed amendments to the minutes of two Plenary meetings, PT/10 and PT/15. Revised minutes are attached. It should also be noted that Mr Donaldson was one of the three UUP delegates at the table for Plenary meeting 16 and one of the supporting delegates for Plenary meeting 17.

3. The Government Team said the purpose of the Business Committee meeting was to establish how best a dedicated sub-Committee could make useful progress, possibly by discussing the Government paper, "Models of Government", passed to the Parties yesterday, which suggested three possible structures for the government of Northern Ireland based on the Parties' proposals. It was noted that the UUP had also tabled for circulation papers entitled "Cultural Expression and Diversity", "Relationships With Westminster" and 16 other papers on human and group rights. The UUP delegation stressed that these papers were being put forward as part of "normal practice" and not as part of any attempt to get round the apparent impasse. The Government Team added that it too had several more papers it could table for discussion.

4. The Alliance delegation said it saw little use in discussing any of these papers until the current "blockage" to the Talks had

been cleared. The UDUP delegation said that it too had papers for discussion which it did not feel would be appropriate to table until after the current difficulties had been overcome.

5. The SDLP delegation said that it was in the final stages of completing a paper for discussion which focused on ways of easing the current problems in the Talks process. They hoped to have the paper available for tabling in time for tomorrow morning's sub-Committee meeting. The UUP delegation suggested that discussion of the SDLP paper would be more fruitful than a nit-picking exercise of the Government's paper. Following a suggestion by the UDUP delegation, it was agreed that all Parties should prepare papers that tackled the problem of the current impasse in the Talks.

6. The SDLP delegation said it saw the impasse as being centred on the problem of identity - the SDLP had seen the question of identity as an internal matter and therefore to be legitimately dealt with during Strand I, whilst they believed the Unionist Parties saw it as an external matter and therefore more appropriate to Strand II discussions. The UDUP delegation agreed but said that there was another reason for the current blockage, that being the SDLP's rejection of accepting the possibility of a majority vote in any form in an Assembly. The Government Team noted that the delegations were actually starting to cover matters more properly left until the sub-Committee discussion.

7. It was agreed that the sub-Committee would meet on Wednesday 27 May at 10.30 and, if necessary, carry on until 8.00 pm that evening. If it seemed desirable, in order to finalise a report to the plenary on 1 June, the sub-Committee could also meet on Friday. It was agreed that there would be three members of each delegation at the table with three others available for consultation in the building. It was also agreed that papers tabled by other Parties in relation to the current impasse, would be confidential to sub-Committee members and Party Leaders only; and that proceedings would not be minuted.

TALKS SECRETARIAT