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Mr. Wright

Deputation from Staff of Magee College

You asked me to bring the views of the deputation which we received on 1 October to the attention of Mr. Lavelle. Shortly afterwards I spoke with Mr. Lavelle about the interview and he advised me that, as he was about to leave the Home Office for the Treasury on completion of his work in the Home Office on proposals for the development of the Northern Ireland economy, it would be better to refer the matter to Mr. North.

In the circumstances, I have thought it right to send a copy of the attached note to Mr. North, as well as to the Private Secretary in connection with S. of S.'s impending visit to Derry. For safety's sake I am also sending a copy to David Faulkner in London.

A. P. Hewins

(A. P. Hewins)
10 October, 1969

RECORD OF A MEETING ABOUT MAGEE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DERRY

Held on Wednesday, 1 October, 1969 at 7.15 p.m.

Four young members of the teaching staff of Magee University College, Derry (Mr. Hunter, Mr. Hardy, Dr. Lindley and Mr. Brown) came to see Mr. Wright at the Conway Hotel on 1 October to talk about the situation of Magee University College.

2. The deputation recited the history of the College and in particular referred to the decision taken in 1965/66 that the College should form an integral part of the New University of Ulster. The main burden of their representations was that the decision to site the headquarters of the New University at Coleraine had been accompanied by a deliberate diminution in the status of Magee College and increasing neglect of its legitimate aspirations and requirements. A considerable body of protest had developed against this policy and a petition containing some 60,000 signatures had been lodged.

3. Of the 2,200 students of the New University of Ulster, there were now only about 200 at Magee College, the rest being at Coleraine. The numbers at Magee had never in fact risen above 350. The buildings and facilities at Magee were inadequate and unattractive to potential university students. A number of subjects, in particular Economics and Science, had ceased to be taught at Magee, which now provided courses only in Ancient and Modern Languages, Philosophy and, on a limited scale, History. The number of students planned for 1972-73 was 250 - 300 only; this figure was too small a base for proper development of the University College. The deputation suggested that the College was in urgent need of additional capital investment on a building programme and the expansion of the teaching staff in the field of History and English. Without this development, the College would be quite unable to offer facilities in any way comparable with those provided at Coleraine.

4. Consideration might also be given to the establishment of a second Ulster medical school in Derry, which had a first-class modern hospital. Even if this proposal were not acceptable, it might be possible to arrange for the clinical part of the medical course to be undertaken in Derry, leaving the earlier pre-clinical work to be carried out at Coleraine.

5. Mr. Wright expressed interest in the proposals put forward by the deputation and advised that they might suitably be brought by the deputation to the /.....

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to the notice of the Derry Development Commission, local Members of Parliament and the authorities of the New University of Ulster. Presentationally he thought it would be advantageous to associate the proposals with a desire to improve the quality of life in the City of Londonderry for all its inhabitants and not merely for members of the academic body, and to improve the opportunities for employment. He undertook to bring the deputation's representations and proposals to the notice of the United Kingdom Government, with a recommendation to them that they should receive careful examination in the context of that Government's increased interest in the development of the economy of Ulster.

A. HEWINS

(A. H. Hewins)
10 October, 1969

cc. Private Secretary
Mr. North
Mr. Faulkner