



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2016/52/97
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	15 October 1986
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	5 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

SECRET

826404

Meeting with Archbishop Eames, 15 October, 1986

21239  
24404  
21311

I met Archbishop Eames, the Church of Ireland Primate, at his residence in Armagh yesterday.

Among the points which the Archbishop made to me were the following:

Molyneaux

Molyneaux, with whom the Archbishop is on close terms, believes that his strategy in relation to the Agreement is paying off. As explained to Eames recently, his concern has been to avoid at all costs a split in the OUP/DUP alliance which would be fatal to the Unionist campaign against the Agreement. To this end he has assumed a deliberately low profile, distancing himself from the media (albeit temporarily) and "not participating actively" in Westminster. He has allowed Paisley and Robinson to command the headlines and to "let off some steam" and has also "kept in contact with the bully-boys" (Eames' phrase). He believes that this approach has helped to defuse strains in the alliance and to preserve a united Unionist front. The rewards are now in sight: with a UK general election looming, Molyneaux is already being wooed by the Tories (Biggs-Davison has been in contact with him recently) and by Labour and SDP/Alliance representatives. He commented to Eames recently that, with the prospect of a hung Parliament, "they will simply have to talk to me".

The Archbishop told me that, despite the Unionists' refusal to speak to the NIO, secret talks have been in progress for some months between the British Government and Molyneaux which hinge on the latter's membership of the Privy Council. He is not aware of their content but knows that Molyneaux is nervous that word of them may leak out. (Note: We have been aware of these talks for some time past from another source who is in touch with one of Molyneaux's aides).

Devolution

The Archbishop told me that he had almost set up a meeting between Molyneaux and Hume - which would have taken place in strict confidence, in his presence and probably in his Armagh residence - when "it was blown to pieces by the Catherwood initiative". Pursuing this a little, I asked him if both parties had explicitly agreed to this. He said that Molyneaux had agreed in principle to a meeting but that Hume had not committed himself. However, since he had known Hume well for years, he was reasonably confident that he could persuade the SDLP leader to take part. (As he reflected further on this, however, he came to the view that Hume might not, after all, agree to a meeting at which he, Eames, would also be present).

The Archbishop was very critical of Catherwood (whom he knows from his Derry days). "Anybody who knows Fred Catherwood has to ask the question: what's in it for Catherwood?" He claimed that the recent Catherwood initiative failed primarily because Paisley lost confidence in Catherwood: on hearing from someone that Catherwood "is in this only for his own ends", the DUP leader asked Molyneaux if this was also his view and, when Molyneaux concurred, Paisley backed away from the initiative. When I asked what Catherwood's "own ends" might have been, the Archbishop replied: "Personal glorification". He also blamed Catherwood for ineptitude in announcing the first stage of an agreement before he had "copper-fastened" the second stage. The Archbishop understands that Catherwood is still active, "nibbling away a bit", but in his view the initiative is now dead - the "human factor" (i.e. Catherwood) destroyed it.

I made the point that Hume is available for talks with the Unionists at any stage but that, in view of the devolution/integration/independence split, he does not have an obvious Unionist interlocutor. The Archbishop agreed that this is a major problem. When I asked why Molyneaux has become such a fervent integrationist, he replied that this is entirely due to Enoch Powell's influence. As an illustration of the power which Powell exerts over the OUP leader, the Archbishop

recalled a lunch which he had with both of them some months ago in Powell's London flat. It was "quite an extraordinary occasion": Powell mercilessly harangued Molyneaux over the OUP's abstentionist policy, to such an extent that Powell's wife had to intervene in order to "restore peace". Molyneaux stayed silent through<sup>out</sup>, "like a child being scolded by his parents". Later on, Powell complained to Eames that "Jim simply won't listen to me".

The Archbishop mentioned in passing a rumour that Powell will not stand at the next general election; some friends believe that he will declare "a plague on both your houses" (i.e., on Westminster for supporting the Agreement and on the OUP for the abstentionist policy) and retire in order to write books.

On the subject of Unionist absentism, the Archbishop understands that Molyneaux and his OUP colleagues may be contemplating a return to Westminster in order to oppose the Queen's Speech. Suspecting that the British Government may intend to omit all references to Northern Ireland from this year's Queen's Speech, the Archbishop has proposed to King that such references be deliberately included in order to give Molyneaux a pretext to return. He hopes that the Unionists may be tempted to repeat the exercise later as suitable opportunities arise and he has suggested to King that the British Government should make its business to provide such opportunities. A series of major speeches on Northern Ireland at regular intervals over the coming months could be used by the OUP MPs to justify visits to Westminster for the purposes of registering opposition. The Unionists could thus be seduced into a gradual return to Westminster.

The Archbishop asked what he should be urging Molyneaux to do at the present time. I replied that, as devolution seems to us to be the only sensible and practical option for Unionists, he should be commending it to Molyneaux. The British and Irish Governments have made plain in the Agreement their support for devolution and the SDLP, both in public and in private, have

indicated their interest in talks on devolved arrangements. It is up to Molyneaux to recognise that this is the only constructive way forward and to engage in serious talks with the SDLP aimed at achieving this. The Archbishop then asked whether, in order to facilitate devolution talks, "something could be done" to get the Unionists off the hook. Significantly, he did not on this occasion propose any device such as an interruption in the work of the Conference. Rather, he talked merely of a "form of words" which would endeavour to reconcile the respective Unionist and SDLP positions on devolution talks (i.e., with/without the Agreement). He also hoped that, if and when talks got underway, the two Governments would temporarily "take the foot off the accelerator" in relation to the implementation of the Agreement. I reminded him of the assurances given by both Governments that the Agreement would be operated in a flexible and sensitive manner.

The Archbishop went on to observe somewhat gloomily, however, that Paisley, a fundamentalist who sees everything in black-and-white terms, "is not interested in any form of words". Furthermore, with the present power struggle in the DUP likely to be resolved sooner or later in Robinson's favour, "verbal acrobatics" will have even less relevance when that time comes.

#### Forthcoming elections

Making little secret of his hope that the Unionist campaign against the Agreement might benefit from changed political circumstances in London and Dublin, Archbishop Eames speculated on the possibility of a hung Dáil as well as a hung Parliament. He wondered whether Sinn Féin, like the Unionists at Westminster, could find themselves holding the balance of power in Dáil Eireann, in which case both Governments would come under pressure to abandon the Agreement.

Three-judge courts

The Archbishop, who has a law degree from Queen's, is on close terms with most members of the Northern judiciary from his student days. He also knows Lord Lowry well.

In regard to three-judge courts, he advised us "to be patient a bit longer - if you wait long enough you might get them". While <sup>he</sup> is aware that Lowry and one other judge are implacably opposed, he knows of "two or three others" who are not only not opposed to the idea but are actually in favour, as they believe that three-judge courts would be a significant improvement in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland. When I pressed him on this, he identified Carswell, whom he knows best among the judiciary, as someone who favours three-judge courts. He also said that, with Lowry due to retire within a couple of years, the race for the succession is already on. In his view, the next Lord Chief Justice will be Carswell.

The Archbishop was also aware of Hailsham's objections to three-judge courts. He told me that he had dinner in London some months ago with Lowry and Hailsham and that both had made clear on that occasion their "total opposition" to three-judge courts. Hailsham, who had also been very critical of the Agreement, clearly resented any proposal which smacked of "political interference" in the judicial process.

*David Donoghue*

David Donoghue,

17 October, 1986.

c.c Taoiseach  
Minister  
Minister for Justice,  
Attorney General  
Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Secretariat  
Anglo-Irish Section  
Ambassador London  
Box