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Title: Note of discussion [of unknown person] with John Hume MP of the Social, Democratic and Labour Party [SDLP] at which topics discussed included: the Northern Ireland plebiscite, the White Paper, the organisation of the SDLP, relations between the Nationalist Party and the SDLP, the proposed method of election for the Northern Ireland Assembly, and invitations to Unionist politicians to official functions in the Republic of Ireland.

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Note of Discussion with John Hume M.P.,
on Saturday, 3rd March, 1973.

Northern Ireland Plebiscite.

Mr. Hume said that by agreement between all the "Nationalist" parties in the 6-Counties no overt boycott campaign is being undertaken, the objective is to keep the situation cool for the voting so as not to evoke a large poll on the Unionist side. With the heat being kept out of the situation it may be barely possible to foster a result indicating less than 50% of the electorate in favour of unity with Britain. This would disarm the Unionist publicity machine which is looking for a big poll on the issue showing a 65/70% in favour of union with Britain.

In the light of the policy being pursued by the "Nationalist" side in the North of Ireland, Mr. Hume said that he would prefer if no adverse comment on the plebiscite came from Government sources in the 26-Counties until after polling day.

As regards comment after polling day in addition to standard comments regarding the predictability and futility of the plebiscite and the one-sided and inappropriate second question, Mr. Hume felt that it would be a valid point for Government spokesmen to make that no approach had been made by the British Government to the Irish Government in relation to the second question although it vitally involved the 26-Counties.

White Paper.

Mr. Hume said that the S.D.L.P. were pursuing independent of the White Paper a conciliatory policy vis-a-vis Unionist opinion in the North. They were to publish in the British News Letter and in the Irish News on Monday 5th March, a large advertisement heading "Policy for Partnership". In that advertisement they were proposing the creation of a assembly in Northern Ireland directly elected having real powers including that of taxation and having

executive and proportionate strength of the parties represented in the assembly. They were proposing that any legislation emanating from Northern Ireland assemblies would be signed by two commissioners or governors appointed by the British Government and Irish Government who would each have the power of veto. They were also proposing that law and order and security should initially at least be put under the control of the two commissioners or governors.

Their proposal having link between North and South was that it should be effected by way of a new institution drawn equally from the elected assemblies of North and South with powers to:-

- (a) deal with matters of common concern such as, tourism, electricity and tele-communication.
- (b) to plan the equalisation and harmonisation of laws and services throughout the 32-Counties.
- (c) to draft a Constitution.
- (d) to agree on a new relationship with Britain.

Mr. Hume indicated that he felt that the British White Paper would not go far enough on the lines they wanted and were proposing. These lines were the logical out-come of their initial discussions with Messrs Taylor and Craige.

Organisation of S.D.L.P.

He informed me that the party had appointed Mr. John Duffy, as Secretary and that in addition they were employing a party organiser.

Relations between Nationalist Party and S.D.L.P.

For the purpose of discussions with the Taoiseach or the Government here, Mr. Hume said that the S.D.L.P. would not wish to be associated with the Nationalist Party. There was fundamental difference of out-look between them, The Nationalist Party policy being practically in line with Mr. Frank McManus and Mr. Paddy Kennedy and being relatively close to the views of the Provisional I.R.A. If the Government should wish to consult the Nationalists and the S.D.L.P. he would be glad if the consultations were kept separate.

Method of election for N.I. Assembly

In reference to the method of election for the Northern Ireland Assembly proposed by the S.D.L.P., Mr. Hume said he favoured not out type of P.R. but list P.R. on the German style. He felt that this would suit his party in particular and would tend to eliminate splinter groups. On this occasion he appeared to be in favour of the McRory divisions of the 6-Counties for elections to the Assembly.

Inviting N.I. representatives to official functions in 26-Counties

Mr. Hume said he felt that the changing climate in the 6-Counties made him feel that people like John Taylor, M.P., William Craig, M.P. and others whom he did not specify would be willing to accept invitations to official functions in the South.