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7th November 1974

Confidential

Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs

I called yesterday in the normal course on Mr Michael Woolf, Director of the Conservative Central Office, with whom I had a discussion about Northern Ireland and the British/^{EEC}renegotiation position. In regard to Northern Ireland Mr Woolf said that he would like to mention a number of matters in which he thought I might be interested. The first was the relationship between the Conservative Party and the United Ulster Unionists in the Commons. He said that he would like it to be known that the Conservative Party has no official contact with the UU Unionists and that they proposed to keep it that way. There were, he said, two different pressures within the Party. On the one hand the Monday Club were pressing for official recognition by the Conservatives of the UU Unionists whereas on the other hand there was very considerable pressure among the young Conservatives for the Party officially to state its dissociation from United Ulster Unionism. In the circumstances the Party decided to take no action at all. However, they have unofficially dropped the "and Unionist" from the Party title for the purpose of Party Political Broadcasts in order to avoid the confusion of Unionist on the United Ulster Unionism.

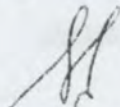
Mr Woolf went on to speak about the failure of the Executive. Apart from the regret at being defeated in the February Election the Party Leader regretted that this defeat did not enable him to see the Sunningdale Agreement through. Mr Woolf strongly confirmed the

1. Miss Sanger
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view that had the Conservatives been in office during the UWC strike Mr Heath would not have "let the matter get out of hand". When questioned as to how the Conservative Party now viewed a solution to the Northern Ireland problem, Mr Woolf gave the impression that this was not a matter to which the Party was actively addressing itself at the present time. His feeling, he said, was one of relief that the Wilson Government was the one which at present had the responsibility of seeking the solutions. He added, however, that it looked as if the problem was going to be with us for some years to come and that the Conservatives would, when at some future time in Government, have to face up to it in a more urgent fashion than they had to at present while in opposition. He felt also that the Northern Ireland problem would have to figure more largely in a future election campaign.

Towards the end of our talk Mr Woolf said that there was a further point which he wished to mention as being of current interest, viz. the effect that bombing attacks in Britain might have on the operation of the Common Travel Area. Since these troubles began there had been pressure within the Conservative Party for the imposition of travel controls between the two countries. These pressures increased with the bombings and there was considerable movement at Backbench and grass-root levels for the Conservatives to include the introduction of restrictions in the Party platform. These pressures have been strongly resisted by the Frontbench who were convinced, apart from anything else, of the impracticability of the proposals. He said he wanted to let me know that the frontbench would continue to resist these pressures but he thought that we might like to be aware of their growth with what he termed the increase in terrorism. I might add that this last subject was raised specifically by Mr Woolf and did not arise out of anything previous in the discussion.


Seán Gaynor
Minister Plenipotentiary