

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code: 2005/151/702

Title: Copy letter from Dermot Nally, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach, to Sean Donlon, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, commenting on the SDLP [Social Democratic and Labour Party] draft report to the United Kingdom Parliament on the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention

Creation Date(s): 23 October 1975

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 1 page

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Cóip do S. 19003

Cóip do S. 19284
194678

Un usually
1. in h.c. Country
To *sd, h.p. + h.p. + h.p. + h.p.*
2. *blair* For main file
3. *Coms* for file on w.r. 271. S19003C

CONFIDENTIAL

*Consultation and
our relations with
SDLP
w.r.
23. 10. 75*

23rd October 1975

Mr. Seán Donlon
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
DUBLIN 2

Dear Seán

Many thanks for your letter of 20th October enclosing a copy of the SDLP's draft report to the United Kingdom Parliament.

As I mentioned this morning, there is a suggestion, if not an argument, running through the document that the institutions of State here somehow need legitimisation - by way of a referendum over the whole island. This is expressed most strongly in the passage in the second last and last pages of the draft report containing the phrase, with supporting comment -

"The problem is the problem of legitimacy of all institutions in Ireland, North and South".

The Taoiseach strongly endorses the view that this idea is, to say the least of it, an anachronism. While the subject may have been live fifty years ago here it has no relevance today. It would be particularly unfortunate that the view should find expression in a report from the SDLP to the British Parliament. Would it be possible, without making too much fuss of it, to get these opinions across to the authors? They can make their points without raising in a formal submission arguments that are dead and gone here.

I may add that even from their own purely party point of view they would run into great difficulty in arguing for a referendum here if there were even a hint that one of the reasons for the referendum was that suggested in this passage.

The question of a referendum involving the whole island of course bristles with other difficulties which I have no doubt you see as clearly as anyone.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

