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Mr. Murray

I am writing
Mr. Horgan

P.A. S. 19003

CONFIDENTIAL

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Lunch with Mr. Hugh Logue

2. 11. 82

29/1/80

The Elections

We first of all discussed the elections in the North. Mr. Logue said that if Hume had been less 'selfish' the SDLP could have won 3 seats in Derry in addition to Sinn Fein's one. He thought Hume three or four days before the election had panicked and embarked on a personal campaign. He contrasted this unfavourably with Paisley's 'restraint' in N. Antrim, which had enabled the DUP to win 4 seats.

The SDLP had done well in Mid-Ulster winning 2 seats, and the INLA attack on the Newry teacher had helped the SDLP in South Down win the only 3 seats in any constituency. Their organisation in South Down was nonetheless very poor, and Frank Feely had called on Seamus Mallon for help.

SDLP first preferences had not gone in significant numbers to Alliance, but a number of Alliance candidates were elected with the help of SDLP transfers. Logue did not feel a decision to have gone into the Assembly would have made much difference to the SDLP's vote one way or the other.

He said the SDLP had a major organisational problem. The Westminster elections next year could see Sinn Fein taking seats in Derry and Fermanagh-South Tyrone and denying the SDLP seats in Armagh and Derry.

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They had no youth organisation, and far too little new blood. There were too many middle-class professionals, and not enough ordinary working people, especially young ones.

Other Nationalist Parties: The IIP and Sinn Fein.

Logue said there was considerable resentment in the SDLP at Government contacts with the IIP. He also said that many in the SDLP held me responsible for promoting such contacts. I said I had met them only once, and that the Taoiseach had put off meeting them till after the election. I said we had to stay in contact with many political groups and persons on both sides of the divide, and that the IIP being on the whole strong supporters of Fianna Fail and the Taoiseach it would be asking a great deal of us to cold shoulder them completely. I agreed that they were of little or no political significance.

Mr. Logue said the SDLP had enough to worry about with Provisional Sinn Fein and would probably not favour inviting the IIP to participate in the Council for a New Ireland.

He considered Prior had made a considerable mistake not inviting Sinn Fein to talks. It would just make Sinn Fein all the more determined to wipe out the SDLP so that the British would have no choice but

to talk to them.

He thought Sinn Fein should be invited to the Council for a New Ireland, but on condition that they renounced violence.

Post-Election situation

Mr. Logue said frankly that the SDLP were in a mess, and that they badly needed the help of the Irish Government in establishing a role for them.

He emphasized heavily, I suspect for tactical reasons, that certain people in the SDLP favoured going into the Assembly to pick up salaries etc. (implying that if the Government did not do something, this is what they would do). I remarked that what the SDLP decided to do vis a vis the Assembly was its own affair, but that I imagined any such move would severely damage its credibility, demonstrating the truth of what Sinn Fein had alleged about the trustworthiness of the SDLP. Mr. Logue of course agreed.

He believed the SDLP would want the Council set up before the end of the year or at any rate by January. I said we had been working on the concept, but would be glad of any views the SDLP might have.

He said Garret FitzGerald had reservations about the scheme, related to the fact that he had his own policy,

and also because Unionists would not be involved. I said that if the purpose was to work out a common Nationalist negotiating position, this need not matter, though we would hope to involve Protestant New Irelanders at least.

He agreed that most of the work should be done in committees rather than in open session. We agreed that it was essential that day to day political differences and indeed differences about constitutional change in the twenty-six counties prior to unity be excluded from the frame of reference. I warned Mr. Logue that if any attempt were to be made to use the Council as a vehicle for advancing Fine Gael's constitutional crusade with SDLP support, the Taoiseach would have nothing to do with it.

Markus Hammy
29/10/82