



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Northern Ireland Assembly - Devolution Schemes  
proposed by parties

1. Four papers were put forward by the parties to the Devolution Report Committee:-

OUP - The Way Forward

DUP - 2 papers

Alliance - 1 paper

The DUP and Alliance proposals had been put forward previously, at the time of the Atkins Conference

2. OUP paper

(1) Principles

- (a) - Devolution is required to control bureaucracy  
and
- (b) - is what majority want
- (c) - it is not possible to reconcile devolution on the basis of widespread consent with minority insistence on powersharing in majority's opposition to it.
- A (d) - proposal to be seen as interim one on the way to full devolution

(2) Structure - Administrative Devolution

- Functions and powers of local Councils to be transferred to Assembly.
- Committees to be established to examine and give advice on each function.
- Ultimate decisions to be taken by Assembly.
- No Executive, but General Purposes Committee would co-ordinate and provide initial sounding board on Committee views.
- Irish Dimension - ~~state~~<sup>same</sup> recognition of legitimacy of fostering Irish cultural activities and state funding.

- Bill of Rights entrenched in Westminster on legislation adapted from ECHR.

### 3) DUP First Paper - The Future Assured

#### (1) Principle<sup>S</sup>

- (a) Government must be responsible to electorate, ~~and~~ those who do not accept Northern Ireland as a distinct entity will never accept anything devised. IX
- (b) Relations with the Republic must be determined between Belfast and Dublin, not London and Dublin only.
- (c) The devolved administration should be as fully involved as possible in security and in funding expenditure. (all transferred services to be funded by Grant-in-Aid).

#### 2) Operation

- Majority rule cabinet style Government all of whose members are members of Assembly and answerable to it collectively.
- Scrutiny Committees of 8 back benchers each Members and Chairmen drawn if necessary equally from Government and Opposition.
- Committees to have normal monitoring powers and right to require Minister to attend and hold enquiries.
- Bills to be discussed in through Committees before second reading: if rejected there, 60% voting required on floor to house to pass.
- Committees subject to time limits on producing reports on legislation.

- Chairmen's Liaison Committee - composed of Leader of House, Chairmen of scrutiny Committees and Leader of Opposition to examine proposals for bills, co-ordinate Committees and allocate their funds.
- Security and External Relations Subject Committees chaired by Prime Minister to advise Secretary of State. 10 members each elected by P.R.
- Bill of Rights and
- stated minority of Assembly - say 30% could require Secretary of State to refer Assembly legislation to Privy Council as in contravention with 1973 Act provisions outlawing discriminatory legislation.

The DUP also outlined a second option, based on the "Proposals for Further Discussion" produced at the end of the Atkins Conference in 1980.

The DUP proposed:

- Executive, majority Government with
- a Council of the Assembly composed of Chair and Deputy Chairmen of Committees (in turn to be chosen on a 50/50 basis representing Government and Opposition).
- Council to have powers to delay adoption of Assembly's equivalent of Queen's speech and Public Expenditure Programme and perhaps referral powers in respect of discriminatory matters.

#### DUP Second Paper - September 1984

As a way of starting on Devolution, DUP proposed

- Legislative Devolution (without Executive devolution - NIO Ministers remain) in respect of transferred powers.

- Power to initiate legislation to lie with NIO and Assembly.
- Secretary of State to be permitted to veto legislation and perhaps delay/defer it but could be overridden by 66% or 70% vote of Assembly.

### 3). Alliance Party

#### (1) Principles

- (a) Institutions must command support of a majority of both sections of the Community.

#### (2) Structure

- Committee system of Government, with
- Chairmen as Ministers.
- Portfolios determined by successive exclusions.
- Chairmen to have reasonable range of Ministerial power, but to involve committees as closely as possible.
- No Executive, but Chairmen to form with Chief Executive, the Finance Committee.
- Chief Executive elected by Assembly.
- Committees and Chairmen to reflect party strength: elected by P.R.
- Chairmen to be dismissed only if voted no confidence in his Committee or loss of support of 76% of Finance Committee.
- Bill of Rights
- 1/3 + 1 of Assembly to be able to appeal proposed actions, legislation etc. from Westminster.