



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Meeting with Dr. Joe Hendron  
1 March 1988

SDLP/Secretary of State Meeting

Dr. Hendron said there will be six on the delegation to meet with the Northern Ireland Secretary of State on 21 March. These include the three MPs, himself, Austin Currie and Sean Farren. The latter two have been chosen, he said, because they were on the devolution sub-committee with John Hume and Seamus Mallon. They have not had any advance indication of the agenda for the meeting but he said they expect that Secretary of State King will ask them for their position on devolution. The SDLP, he said, had not as yet thought-out their policy on devolution. Indeed he could not see them making any proposals on this issue other than saying that they would be prepared to talk to the unionists to find out if there is a willingness on their part to come to terms with nationalists. In the meantime, Hume has asked him to call a meeting of SDLP constituency representatives for 16 March to discuss the issues that may possibly come up at the meeting with King.

Hume/Adams Meeting

He spoke about the second Hume/Adams meeting in which Hume had explored the possibility of a meeting between delegations from the two parties. He said Hume, influenced by the same "third party" who set up the original meeting, is still hopeful that the meetings can achieve a worthwhile result and has therefore decided that a representative group from both parties should meet at a relatively early date. While Dr. Hendron is not convinced that the initiative will lead to an end to violence, he is nevertheless willing to go along with John Hume's decision.

Release of Private Thain

Dr. Hendron has issued a particularly strong statement condemning the early release of Private Thain since the murder victim, Thomas Reilly, had come from his constituency, West Belfast. He asked if we could use the case to press the British into releasing young nationalists who are held under the Secretary

of State's pleasure (SOSPs). I informed Dr. Hendron that the Tánaiste had raised the matter at last week's Conference in Dublin and that the issue would be actively pursued in the Secretariat and the Conference. Dr. Hendron said he intended exploiting the opportunity of Thain's release to the full, in particular in pressing the British on behalf of the SOSPs.

West Belfast - Economic

As usual, he asked about the possibility of something being done to provide job opportunities in West Belfast. I said that we were pressing West Belfast's case for some economic initiative with the British and were in contact with the Board of the International Fund to try and establish West Belfast as a priority case. I told him that a special task force of officials, from both North and South, had been formed to identify priority areas for support. I said that I would set up a meeting with them to allow him to outline his ideas and priorities.

U.D.R.

X | He complained that in recent times unaccompanied UDR patrols were stopping traffic along the Finaghy Road North exit out of West Belfast. Like the previous UDR patrols on Stockmans Lane and Castle Street, their presence is seen by nationalists as provocative and there have already been complaints of harassment.

  
Liam Canniffe

} March 1988

cc: Mr. Gallagher  
Counsellors A-I  
Secretariat  
Box

3579m