



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2018/68/19
Creation Dates:	30 November 1988
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

follow up had been arranged. He said that Hume's speech at the SDLP Conference on Saturday was taken as a signal by the unionists and they acted on it. Alderdice formed the conduit by which the meeting was arranged. He made the point that both Molyneaux and Paisley are reluctant to participate in any political movement. Nonetheless, both feel compelled to go along with any talks that may begin. Alderdice said that one of the obstacles was an absence of that vital element of trust in Hume by the unionist leadership and vice-versa. In these circumstances, he argued that there was a need for a "bridge" between both sides and he felt that Alliance could provide that link.

Notwithstanding this, he was told, apparently by Robinson, that Hume has asked for the exclusion of the Alliance Party from any preliminary negotiations. Alderdice feels that this will be accomplished by holding all their meetings at Westminster.

Alderdice, visibly annoyed at his exclusion, pointed out that the Alliance Party had been the catalyst at Duisberg and the go between in the activities which followed it. He argued that they, more than anyone else, had convinced the unionist rank and file of the futility of opposing the Anglo-Irish Agreement and not actively seeking a political settlement. It was Alliance, he said which finally convinced the Churches to encourage unionist politicians of the need to look for a political solution. Their recent joint statement calling for an input into the review of the workings of the Conference had come after he personally had visited all the Church leaders and asked them to do so. This added to the pressure on unionist political leaders from within their own community to engage in the current contact.

He feels his party has at least bought its place at the conference table. He added that Alliance could still have a pivoted role in the lead up or during any negotiations because they are in the unique position of being able to shoulder what is

politically unacceptable to mainstream unionists and to put them on the table in such a way as to avoid forcing one or other side to withdraw.



Liam Canniffe
1 December 1988

c.c. Mr. Gallagher.