

MINUTES OF PRELIMINARY MEETING HELD AT STORMONT ON
MONDAY, 31 DECEMBER 1973, AT 2 30 PM

PRESENT: Mr Faulkner (Chief Minister)
Mr Fitt (Deputy Chief Minister)

Mr Napier (Office of Law Reform)
Mr Baxter (Office of Information Services)
Mr Bradford (Department of the Environment)
Mr Currie (Department of Housing, Local Government
and Planning)
Mr Devlin (Department of Health and Social Services)
Mr Hume (Department of Commerce)
Mr Kirk (Department of Finance)
Mr McIvor (Department of Education)
Mr Morrell (Department of Agriculture)

Mr Bloomfield)
Mr Sythes) Secretariat

A G E N D A

Confidentiality
Code of Conduct
Titles of Members
Meetings
Conduct of Business
Legislative Business
Security
Vote of Confidence

1. INTRODUCTION

Mr Faulkner welcomed members, referred to the friendship and respect which had been established, not least during the Sunningdale talks, and hoped that this spirit would typify the whole range of the Executive's business. Mr Fitt endorsed and supported these remarks.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of matters discussed at Executive meetings was agreed - the only material to issue from meetings would be agreed statements, or conclusions on which action was required, and minutes to those concerned.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

A paper would be prepared which, if adopted, would apply to all members of the Administration. In the meantime it was agreed that Members should -

- (a) declare any private interest in a matter under discussion; and
- (b) avoid any conflict, or appearance of conflict, between private interests and official duties.

4. TITLES OF MEMBERS

Formal legal titles are those used in the Constitution Act and the Warrants of Appointment, and must be used when taking a formal act such as signing an Order or Regulation. For informal purposes it was agreed that Mr Faulkner should be known as the "Chief Minister", Mr Fitt as the "Deputy Chief Minister" and other Members as "Minister of plus name of the Department. By analogy Mr Baxter would be known as Minister of Information, Mr McGrady as Minister of Co-ordination

and Mr Napier either as the Legal Member or Minister of Law Reform. It was agreed to let this practice develop naturally in the Assembly.

5. MEETINGS

It was agreed that normal meetings of the Executive should be held on Tuesdays at 11 00 am.

6. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

A paper entitled "Conduct of Executive Business" was circulated and Members were asked to consider it and raise with the Secretary any points of detail which might occur to them.

7. FURTHER PAPERS

Papers on relations with the Secretary of State and the Northern Ireland Office, Assembly Consultative Committees, collective responsibility and the making of important appointments were being prepared. These would be circulated for comment, or tabled for discussion.

8. GENERAL INFORMATION

It was suggested that a day should be set aside to enable senior departmental officials to explain various matters of interest and concern to the Executive - for example: public expenditure control, social and economic planning and co-ordination of inter-related activities. It was agreed that Tuesday, 8 January, starting at 11 00 am and continuing into the afternoon, would be suitable for this purpose.

9. LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

It was agreed that Mr McGrady should be asked to be Ministerial Chairman of a Future Legislation Committee to plan the longer-term legislative business. The Secretary of the Executive would act as Official Chairman to the Committee as required. To arrange the day-to-day business of the House and to answer questions on such matters it was agreed that Major Hall-Thompson should deputise for the Leader of the Assembly.

10. SECURITY

There was a general discussion on the Executive's attitude to questions of security. While recognising that Members have no function it was agreed that they must be free to voice their concern individually as public representatives and to make proper representations, discreetly, to the Secretary of State. The Executive should also be prepared to offer advice and indeed must do so where Departmental activities are involved, eg at Aldergrove, either separately as Ministers within their own fields of responsibility or collectively as the Executive.

11. PERSONAL SECURITY

Dissatisfaction was expressed at present arrangements both as to travel and as to residences. Provision of official cars was the function of the Ministry of Finance and Mr Dougall came before the meeting to explain the present situation. Escort of official cars and protection of members' homes were matters for the Police. The Secretary was asked to speak to the Chief Constable and request a report on the security position of each member of the Executive.

12. VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

The wording of a vote of confidence to be tabled at once and

debated when the Assembly resumed was agreed with one minor drafting amendment.

13. BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

A letter from the Clerk of the Assembly suggesting that more time should be set aside for government business was referred for Mr McGrady and Major Hall-Thompson to consider. It was further suggested that they should also consider steps to amend Standing Orders so as to give the Speaker stronger disciplinary powers.

14. PRESS STATEMENT

A draft statement was discussed and agreed as amended.

[Redacted]
Office of the Executive
2 January 1974

[Redacted] Present:
Mr J Cooper
Mr R Cooper
Major Hall-Thompson
Mr McGrady
All Permanent Secretaries