

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD AT
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, STORMONT, ON
TUESDAY, 2 APRIL 1974 AT 10 00 AM

- PRESENT:
- Mr Faulkner (Chief Minister)
 - Mr Fitt (Deputy Chief Minister) - For items 6 - 10
 - Mr Napier (Law Reform)
 - Mr Baxter (Information)
 - Mr Currie (Housing, Local Government and Planning)
 - Mr Devlin (Health and Social Services) - For items 4 - 10
 - Mr Hume (Commerce) - For items 6 - 10
 - Mr Kirk (Finance)
 - Mr McIvor (Education)
 - Mr Morrell (Agriculture)
 - Mr I Cooper (Community Relations) - For items 1 and 2
 - Mr R Cooper (Manpower) - For item 4
 - Major Hall-Thompson - For item 1
 - Mr Basil Glass - For item 1
 - Mr Bloomfield) Secretariat
 - Mr Sythes)
 - Mr Roberts (Head of Press Services)

A G E N D A

1. Business of the Assembly
2. Community Relations Commission (EXMEMO 51/74)
3. Proposed Measure to set up a Department of Legal Affairs (EXMEMO 46/74)
4. Report on Youth Employment Service (EXMEMO 48/74)
5. Continuing Education (EXMEMO 49/74)
6. Social Security (EXMEMO 50/74)
7. City Centre Traders (EXMEMO 45/74)
8. Central Consumer Group (EXMEMO 47/74)
9. Civil Disobedience
10. Chief Minister's visit to London

1. BUSINESS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Considered on basis of an oral report by the Chief Whip in which he mentioned steps he had taken to ensure an even flow of business, in particular, the matter of questions.

Discussed and during discussion the following points were made and agreed:

- (a) that party Whips should be asked to try to organise an even flow of questions to avoid overloading any one Minister on any one particular day;
- (b) that Government time should be allowed to private members who had worthwhile Measures to promote;
- (c) that Departments should be urged to put forward their proposals for new Measures as quickly as possible; and
- (d) that suitable statements by Ministers should be introduced at favourable opportunities.

2. COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 51/74 dated 29 March 1974 introduced by the Minister of Community Relations. Previously discussed by the Executive on 26 March 1974 (EXMIN 74/14/3).

Decided that:

- (a) a non-statutory Advisory Council should be set up to advise the Minister of Community Relations on matters affecting community relations in Northern Ireland;
- (b) the Council should be appointed and chaired by the Minister;
- (c) the Council should consist of one third District Councillors, one third leaders of community groups and one third persons interested in community relations;
- (d) the Council should have no executive functions; and
- (e) the Secretariat should be provided by the Department of Community Relations.

3. PROPOSED MEASURE TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 46/74 dated 25 March 1974 introduced by the Legal Member. Previously considered by the Executive on 24 January 1974 (EXMIN 74/5/3).

Decided that the proposed Measure providing for the establishment of a Department of Legal Affairs should be approved and be introduced in the Assembly as soon as possible.

4. REPORT ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 48/74 dated 27/3/74 introduced by the Minister of Education.

Discussed briefly when Ministers welcomed the Report and suggested that the Agricultural Colleges and the Association of District Councils should be included among the bodies whose comments were to be invited.

Decided that:

- (a) the Report should be issued as proposed to the interested bodies, including the Agricultural Colleges and the Association of District Councils; and
- (b) following comments from these bodies proposals for the future of the Youth Employment Service should be prepared by the two Departments for submission to their Consultative Committees meeting jointly.

5. CONTINUING EDUCATION

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 49/74 dated 27 March 1974 introduced by the Minister of Education.

Discussed when Ministers suggested several points to be considered for inclusion in the paper.

Decided that the Memorandum be approved for submission to the Consultative Committee subject to consideration being given by the Minister to the inclusion of a reference to:

- (a) Agricultural Colleges in paragraph 2;
- (b) Department of Agriculture in paragraph 7;
- (c) the Public Records Office in paragraphs 7 and 10;
- (d) consultation with ICTU; and
- (e) the continuing role of technical colleges.

6. SOCIAL SECURITY

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 50/74 dated 28 March 1974 introduced by the Minister of Health and Social Services. Previously considered by the Executive on 26 March 1974 (EXMIN 74/14/8).

Discussed and during discussion the Chief Minister made the general point that the Prime Minister had been receptive of the suggestion that as much legislation as possible should be introduced in the Assembly and had promised full co-operation, subject to their being able to overcome any technical difficulties that might be involved.

Decided that the Measure as drafted should be introduced in the Assembly as soon as possible.

7. CITY CENTRE TRADERS

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 45/74 dated 25 March 1974 introduced by the Minister of Commerce.

Discussed at length. During discussions Ministers recognised the wide extent of the problem involving, as well as traders in the centre of Belfast, houseowners, tenants of public authority houses and traders in many other parts of the city and other towns throughout the country especially Londonderry, Newry and Strabane. Against this it was also recognised that some other town centre traders had gained considerably because of changes in shopping habits caused by destruction elsewhere. Mention was also made of the hardship caused by delay in payment of compensation and the apparent unwillingness of landlords to repair privately rented houses damaged by bombing.

Decided that:

- (a) no action should be taken at present to help city centre traders but that the position should be kept under review;
- (b) the Ministers of Health and Social Services, Housing, Local Government and Planning, and Community Relations should jointly discuss ways of relieving hardship for occupiers of privately owned houses which had been damaged by terrorists; and
- (c) the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister would take up with the Secretary of State the question of speeding up compensation payments.

8. CENTRAL CONSUMER GROUP

Considered on basis of EXMEMO 47/74 dated 26 March 1974 introduced by the Minister of Commerce.

Discussed briefly when the Minister of Finance asked that his Department should be kept closely in touch with any financial points arising and the Minister of Information

expressed a continuing interest in the setting up and work of the Group.

Decided that:

- (a) the Minister of Commerce should appoint a non-statutory body to be a Central Consumer Group, under an independent chairman;
- (b) the Group should have the following terms of reference:
 - (i) to provide a central body of opinion on Northern Ireland consumer affairs;
 - (ii) to advise the Head of the Department of Commerce on consumer protection matters; and
 - (iii) to establish appropriate links with the Office of Fair Trading for the purpose of assisting the latter in carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland.

9. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

A statement to be made by the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Planning was circulated and discussed in detail.

Decided that the statement should be made on 3 April 1974, and that the Minister should consider the following points in preparing the final version:

- (a) the desirability of keeping closely to the words used in the Sunningdale communique in relation to phasing out detention (paragraph 3 on page 1);
- (b) the use of the word "evaporated" in relation to the campaign (paragraph 4 on page 1);
- (c) the question of avoiding all hardship - the point being that it might not be possible to avoid some element of hardship (paragraph 3 on page 2 and paragraph 1 on page 4); and
- (d) in the final paragraphs, beginning at the foot of page 3, it should be made clear that persons making settlements before 20 May next will not have to pay collection charges.

10. CHIEF MINISTER'S VISIT TO LONDON

The Chief Minister reported briefly on his visit to London on Monday, 1 April 1974, when he had had talks with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, and later with the Leader of the Opposition. The following were the main points which emerged from the talks:

- (a) the Executive will be supported and encouraged to serve its full four year term of office;
- (b) there is firm support from both main parties for the Constitution Act and the Sunningdale agreement;
- (c) there is a vast amount of goodwill in the House of Commons for the Executive and very little, if any, for the "loyalist" group;
- (d) violence will not have any effect on the British Government's support for what the Executive are doing, or on their attitude to Northern Ireland;
- (e) the Prime Minister will press Mr Cosgrave during his visit on Friday to London to say exactly what they are doing about terrorists; and
- (f) the British Government will support to the fullest extent compatible with the economic situation and their policies for the rest of the United Kingdom, the Executive's social and economic proposals when they are put forward in the summer.

The Executive considered a draft statement to be issued on their behalf and agreed it in principle subject to several amendments to be agreed after the meeting by the Minister of Commerce, the Legal Member and the Minister of Information. The following text was agreed:

"We have come together from our different political backgrounds - from the Alliance, SDLP and Unionist Parties - because we share a concern for the future of Northern Ireland and want to see this community making progress in conditions of peace and stability.

"We knew when we agreed to work together, and we know even more unmistakably today, that there are those in Northern Ireland to whom peace, progress, stability and the democratic process of decision and debate are anathema.

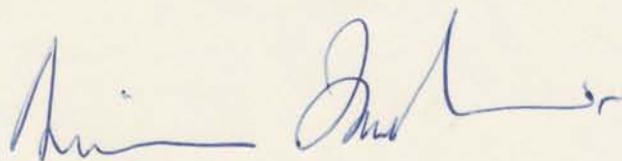
"We stand together against all such people - whether they call themselves IRA, UVF or UFF.

"We all want to see normality in Northern Ireland - a normality in which detention will have ended and in which law and order can be preserved by a civilian police force and not by the presence of heavily armed troops.

"We now call upon all those in Northern Ireland who are appalled and disgusted by the recurrent violence to recognise that there are practical steps which they

can take to create that situation of normality. If reliance upon the Army is to be reduced, the locally recruited security forces must be in a position to take on further responsibilities. This they can only do when they have the support of the whole community. This is our objective.

"The best way to deal with men of violence is through the effective operation of the ordinary processes of the law. But the law cannot be effective until each citizen accepts a personal commitment to see to it that his area, his housing estate, his street, is not used by the bomber or the gunman."



Office of the Executive
STORMONT

3 April 1974