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EXMIN 74/26

Copy No:

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 1974 IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, STORMONT, AT 12 NOON

PRESENT:

Mr Faulkner (Chief Minister)
Mr Fitt (Deputy Chief Minister)
Mr Napier (Law Reform)
Mr Baxter (Information)
Mr Bradford (Environment)
Mr Currie (Housing, Local Government and Planning)
Mr Devlin (Health and Social Services)
Mr Hume (Commerce)
Mr Kirk (Finance)
Mr McIvor (Education)
Mr Morrell (Agriculture)
Mr I Cooper (Community Relations)
Mr R Cooper (Manpower Services)
Major Hall-Thompson (Chief Whip)
Mr McGrady (Executive Planning and Co-ordination)

Mr K P Bloomfield) Secretariat
Mr P A Sythes)

Mr T M Roberts - Head of Press Services

A G E N D A

1. Sunningdale - Issue of Agreed Statement

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1. SUNNINGDALE - ISSUE OF AGREED STATEMENT

At the request of the Deputy Chief Minister the Executive agreed to adjourn until 12 30 pm to allow him further time for consultations with his party colleagues.

On re-assembling at 1 10 pm Ministers reported on news which they had received from the Departments as to the worsening situation, in which it was becoming increasingly clear that control, not only of power supplies, but of fuel had passed to the Ulster Workers' Council. In order to obtain supplies the CBI, the Ulster Bank and members of the public had been obliged to negotiate with strikers.

The Deputy Chief Minister supported by his party colleagues argued for further time on the ground that if the statement were to be released immediately it would be taken as having been agreed under duress and that this interpretation would lead to further demands from the strikers.

The Chief Minister made it clear that he had been told by the Secretary of State and Mr Francis Pym, that the Executive was assured of full support by both major parties at Westminster, but that they needed the Executive's backing urgently by way of this initiative so that they could continue their support.

A further adjournment was agreed at 1 40 pm.

On re-assembling at 2 10 pm the Deputy Chief Minister reported that the position was unchanged.

The Chief Minister then proposed that the statement should be issued immediately and this proposal was agreed by seven votes to four, as follows:-

For

Chief Minister
Minister of Law Reform
Minister of Information
Minister of the Environment
Minister of Finance
Minister of Agriculture
Minister of Education

Against

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister of Housing, LG & Planning
Minister of Health & Social Services
Minister of Commerce

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The Deputy Chief Minister then said that with the deepest distress and regret he had to inform the Executive that he and his colleagues could no longer regard themselves as bound by the principle of collective responsibility.

At 4 20 pm the Deputy Chief Minister reported further that he and his colleagues were in a position to accept the proposal and that it could be regarded as carried unanimously.

Office of the Executive
Stormont

28 May 1974

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