



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
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4 March 1976

Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Sir Robert Lowry
Chairman of the Convention
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast

Dear Sir Robert

In my letter of 14 January 1976 reconvening the Convention I made it clear that the Government took the view that the proposals for a system of government within Northern Ireland which were contained in the Convention's Report of 7 November 1975 did not command sufficiently widespread acceptance throughout the community there for a system based solely upon them to provide stable and effective government.

In the light of this, and by virtue of the powers conferred on me by paragraph 15(4) of Schedule 2 of the Northern Ireland Act 1974, the Convention was reconvened in order that it might consider and report on the following matters:

- (a) how best agreement can be reached on a system of government built on the principles on which there is already widespread agreement, and providing for a form of partnership and participation, and which will command the most widespread acceptance throughout the whole of the community in Northern Ireland and in both parts of that community;
- (b) whether a committee system might be of value as part of a wider and acceptable constitutional framework;
- (c) whether progress could best be made on the basis of setting up a system of government which, though not temporary, is capable of evolving over a period of time into permanent and agreed constitutional arrangements;

In paragraph 26 of my letter, I also said that the Government's view was that a period of four weeks should be sufficient for the Convention to make progress on the matters referred to it.

The Report of the inter-party talks and of the debates which have taken place have made it plain that no progress has been made, or is likely to be made, in the Convention on reaching agreement on proposals which would command sufficiently widespread acceptance throughout the community in Northern Ireland to provide stable and effective government.

In these circumstances, and bearing in mind that the four weeks have already expired, I have advised Her Majesty to dissolve the

/Convention ...



under the powers contained in paragraph 15(3) of Schedule 2 to the Northern Ireland Act 1974: and an Order in Council has been made dissolving the Convention on 6 March 1976.

I shall be announcing the dissolution of the Convention to the House of Commons today, and I enclose for your information a copy of the statement I propose to make.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the Government's appreciation of the work which you as Chairman have undertaken. Your impartiality and independence have been outstanding, and all those with the interests of Northern Ireland at heart owe you a debt of gratitude for all that you have done.

Yours Sincerely

Mary-Kate