

RESTRICTED

Mr Wyatt
Mr Angel (L)
Mr Abbott (L)
Miss MacGlashan

Mr Blatherwick

FRANK MILLAR

1. I had lunch on 6 May with Frank Millar, the UUP Press and Information Officer. Millar is an acute and mildly disaffected member of the Glengall Street team, and the following points from our conversation are worth recording.

(1) UUP. Millar judged that the Party had drawn the wrong lesson from the South Belfast result, believing smugly that it showed that the old automatic allegiances were as reliable as ever among grassroots Unionists. In fact the by-election had been "the last time the Orange card will be played successfully in Northern Ireland": Martin Smyth had won not because he was the Head of the Orange Order but because McCrea was seen as a carpetbagger and had also been damaged by rumours of homosexuality. The UUP should realise the implications of David Cook's increased vote and start thinking seriously of future co-operation; whereas in fact Molyneaux and Smyth were saying privately that there was "no chance" of any sort of coalition with Alliance in the Assembly. The tactic of the UUP leadership in the Assembly would be to move a resolution as early as possible calling for the implementation of the Convention Report. When this failed to achieve 70% support, Molyneaux would argue that this proved the whole set-up was rigged and had nothing to offer to Unionists, and the UUP would return to concentrating on Westminster. In parenthesis Millar commented that what the Province really needed was a left of centre Unionist party, shorn of the Orange connection and led by someone like McCusker. This could concentrate on "real politics" and provide a home for the many Catholics who were happy enough to remain in the UK provided that they got a fair deal. However, he did not believe that the UUP was capable of transforming itself in this direction: the dead weight of inertia and timidity was too great. As it was, the championing of social and economic concerns was rapidly becoming the prerogative of the DUP, who linked it with a corrosive sectarianism.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

(ii) Unionist Devolution Group. Millar commented that the bulk of the UDG had completely lost their nerve: they were terrified of taking a constructive attitude towards the White Paper in case the Party leadership succeeded in labelling them as power-sharers, and their "Response" to the initiative (which had been written by David Trimble and Edgar Graham) was so negative that it could have been produced by Molyneaux himself. Trimble was over-influenced by the views of Bill Craig, his old chief, while Graham would veer with every wind in the effort to get himself elected to the Assembly. It was most unlikely that the UDG would organise any real challenge to Molyneaux's leadership when the AGM of the Ulster Unionist Council takes place on 11 June. The devolutionists did apparently intend to run Eddie Keers for one of the lesser party offices, but this was a stupid move since Keers was a money-lender and widely disliked. (Millar commented en passant that since before the Atkins Conference the NIO had made a mistake in trying to work on the UUP through the medium of committed devolutionists like Harry West and David Trimble. At bottom all the devolutionists were Protestant supremacists who believed in unalloyed majority rule; the only unionists with the confidence and imagination to make positive moves towards the minority were integrationists like McCusker (and, Millar clearly implied, himself) who genuinely wanted to pull the Province out of the sectarian spiral.)

(iii) Assembly Elections: North Belfast. Millar, who is very much John Carson's protégé in North Belfast, aspires to the UUP nomination both for Westminster and for the Assembly in that constituency. Much infighting is going on, since the Westminster nomination is coveted by Cllr Cecil Walker (the unsuccessful UUP candidate in May 1979 after Carson retired) while the position of Carson's running mate for the Assembly is being contested by Cllr Billy Bell, Alan Carr (late of NILP), Walker and others. Millar also has the problem that his father, an Independent Loyalist who is currently Deputy Lord Mayor, also wishes to contest the seat, and voters are liable to be confused if two Frank Millars are on the ballot paper. Millar hopes at the end of the day to dissuade his father from running and is fairly confident, with Carson's support, of selection for one forum or the other.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

E.P.

(iv) Kincora. Millar expressed the strong hope (on which I did not comment) that the judicial enquiry would not begin before the Assembly election and that the whole affair would die a natural death. (He has a clear interest in trying to minimise the publicity, since he is married to William McGrath's daughter and is a former head of the now disbanded "Ireland's Heritage" Orange lodge.) He also alluded to the current gossip that Joshua Cardwell, the highly respected East Belfast councillor who died recently, in fact committed suicide after being questioned by the police over Kincora. (For several years in the 1960s Cardwell chaired the old Belfast Corporation Committee which was responsible for childrens' homes in the city.)

Stephen J. Leach.

S J LEACH

Political Affairs Division

10 May 1982

Ref: PAB/211/DE

RESTRICTED