

CONFIDENTIAL

NOT FOR THE RECORD

cc: Mr Merifield
Mr Reeve
Mr Pearson
Miss Elliott
Mr Hamilton (DOE)
Mr Pinkerton (ESL)
Mr J Stephens

8 MAY 1985
1658

3 MAY 1985
1658

During my visit to Londonderry on 2 May 1985 I took the opportunity of discussing the recent controversy surrounding the Honourable The Irish Society with Pat Devine (Leader of the SDLP on the Council) and Colm Geary (Clerk to the Council).

I was assured by both that it is a storm in a teacup and that after the election the issue will probably die away unless, of course, the new Sinn Fein councillors see it as an issue which will cause division within the council chamber. Colm Geary said he would not be surprised if the council lost interest to the extent that they did not even enquire as to the result of their letter.

Pat Devine, whilst supporting the motion, recognises that the society has changed its function and image over the years and has contributed to progress within the city.

Despite assurances that this issue will not be of any great importance. I would not change my advice that the reply from the Secretary of State should not issue until after the election or that the Lord Mayor of London should make his official call on the Mayor of Derry without representatives of the Society present.

Mr Wankerton *B/715*

To see return M

J E McConnell
J E McCONNELL
Political Affairs Division
2 May 1985

MA
3/5

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