

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



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SPEECH - THE RT. HON. H. W. WEST.
ANNUAL UNIONIST PARTY CONFERENCE - NEWCASTLE.
SATURDAY 8TH. OCTOBER, 1977.

FOR SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME THE LEADERSHIP OF THE UNIONIST PARTY HAS BEEN SO CONCERNED WITH CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS THAT DOMESTIC ISSUES HAVE NOT HAD THE ATTENTION TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED.

THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM AS A WHOLE IS IMPROVING AND THIS BRINGS SOME HOPE OF A MORE BUOYANT ECONOMY AND MORE EMPLOYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND, THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS SHOWN HIS CONCERN AND DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE ULSTER'S ECONOMIC POSITION. HIS EFFORTS TO BRING ELECTRICITY CHARGES FOR INDUSTRY MORE INTO LINE WITH CHARGES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE INCREASE IN CAPITAL GRANTS FOR INDUSTRY HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED A MUCH NEEDED TONIC. VERY WELCOME AS THESE MOVES ARE, THEY ARE A SMALL CONTRIBUTION WHEN SET AGAINST THE ENORMOUS DAMAGE DONE TO OUR ECONOMIC STRUCTURE BY THE CIVIL UNREST RESULTING MAINLY FROM THE MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR AFFAIRS BY SUCCESSIVE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS. THE DOWNWARD TREND IN ULSTER'S ECONOMIC AFFAIRS WHICH STARTED AT THIS TIME HAS NOT YET BEEN ARRESTED. I HOPE THAT THE NEWLY APPOINTED ECONOMIC COUNCIL WILL BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO INFLUENCE FUTURE GOVERNMENT THINKING.

THERE IS ONE ASPECT OF GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICY THAT I CANNOT SUPPORT AND THAT IS ITS APPROACH TO WAGE CONTROL. TO MY MIND IT IS COWARDLY FOR A GOVERNMENT TO TRY TO ENFORCE CONTROL OF WAGES BY BLACKMAILING EMPLOYERS RATHER THAN BY LEGISLATION APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT. THIS IS A NEW AND SINISTER TURN WHICH MAKES A NONSENSE OF DEMOCRACY. HAVE WE NOW REACHED THE POINT WHEN THOSE WHO DISPLEASE THE POLITICAL PARTY IN GOVERNMENT ARE GOING TO BE DENIED SERVICES WHICH PARLIAMENT INTENDED TO BE PROVIDED FOR ALL WHO REMAIN WITHIN THE LAW? THIS SORT OF UNDEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOUR IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY WHICH RELIES ON LAWS PROPERLY MADE TO ORDER SOCIETY AND NOT ON ARBITRARY SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY GOVERNMENT ON THOSE WHO ACT CONTRARY TO GOVERNMENT WISHES ALTHOUGH NOT BREAKING THE LAW. THESE ACTIONS OF GOVERNMENT SHOW HOW HOLLOW HAVE BEEN THE SELF RIGHTEOUS UTTERINGS ABOUT UNIONIST GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY MANY MINISTERS AND OTHER POLITICIANS OVER RECENT YEARS.

I CANNOT LEAVE ECONOMIC POLICY WITHOUT SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT AGRICULTURE - OUR LARGEST SINGLE INDUSTRY, PROVIDING A LIVELIHOOD DIRECTLY ON THE FARMS AND IN PROCESSING PLANTS FOR FOURTEEN PER CENT OF OUR PEOPLE AND INDIRECTLY ENABLING PERHAPS A FURTHER FOURTEEN PER CENT TO EARN THEIR LIVELIHOOD. SADLY PRODUCTION IN OUR BASIC INDUSTRY HAS BEEN RUNNING DOWN DURING RECENT YEARS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1930'S.

/ OUTPUT OF BEEF DOWN BY TWENTY PER CENT

OUTPUT OF BEEF DOWN BY TWENTY PER CENT, EGGS THIRTY PER CENT AND PIGS BY NEARLY FIFTY PER CENT. THE INCREASE IN THE PRODUCTION OF MUTTON AND LAMB HAS BEEN GREATLY IMPEDED BY THE MENACE OF MARAUDING DOGS. MANY OF YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE VERY DISTRESSING PICTURE ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE NEWS-LETTER LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE CARNAGE CAUSED BY DOGS ON ONE SHEEP FLOCK AND THIS IS BY NO MEANS AN ISOLATED INCIDENT YET THE LOCAL MINISTER IN CHARGE OF AGRICULTURE IS UNWILLING TO INTRODUCE EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION TO CONTROL DOGS DESPITE THE ADVICE OF A COMMITTEE SET UP TO STUDY THIS MENACE.

MILK IS THE ONLY MAJOR COMMODITY WHICH HAS SHOWN A STEADY INCREASE OVER THE YEARS BUT IT TOO IS NOW IN GREAT DANGER. THE REASON IS THAT AT THE END OF THE PRESENT YEAR THE E. E. C. TRANSITION PERIOD IS COMPLETED AND THE UNITED KINGDOM GUARANTEED PRICE FOR MILK WILL CEASE. INSTEAD PRODUCERS WILL HAVE TO RELY ON THE E. E. C. SYSTEM OF SUPPORTING MILK PRICES THROUGH INTERVENTION BUYING OF BUTTER AND SKIM MILK POWDER. BECAUSE OF THE ARTIFICIALLY HIGH VALUE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM GREEN POUND THE E. E. C. INTERVENTION PRICE LEVELS FOR BUTTER AND SKIM MILK POWDER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL BE VERY LOW IN TERMS OF POUNDS. THAT WILL NOT BE TOO SERIOUS IN GREAT BRITAIN WHERE ABOUT SIXTY PER CENT OF THE MILK IS SOLD ON THE HIGHER PRICE LIQUID MARKET BUT IT WILL BE VERY SERIOUS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND PRODUCERS WHERE ONLY TWENTY PER CENT IS SOLD FOR LIQUID CONSUMPTION.

URGENT ACTION BY GOVERNMENT IS NEEDED TO PREVENT RETURNS TO NORTHERN IRELAND MILK PRODUCERS FROM FALLING FAR BEHIND THOSE OF GREAT BRITAIN OR INDEED EIRE PRODUCERS. WITHOUT A SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND THE RETURNS TO OUR MILK PRODUCERS AFTER 31ST. DECEMBER NEXT WOULD BE ABOUT 8 P. PER GALLON BELOW RETURNS IN GREAT BRITAIN. THERE IS LITTLE TIME LEFT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT RE-ASSURING NORTHERN IRELAND PRODUCERS.

OUR MEAT PLANTS, BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE BEEF INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT MUST HAVE A MORE STABLE FUTURE. THE PRACTICE OF EXTENDING THE SUBSIDY KNOWN AS THE MEAT INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR A FEW MONTHS AT A TIME UNDERMINES THE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF BOTH MEAT PLANTS AND FARMERS. THE PAYMENTS UNDER THE MEAT INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME MUST BE MADE EQUAL TO THE MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS WHICH APPLY TO THE TRADE IN CATTLE BETWEEN THE IRISH REPUBLIC AND GREAT BRITAIN OTHERWISE I DON'T SEE HOW NORTHERN IRELAND PLANTS WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO COMPETE WITH PLANTS IN THE REPUBLIC WHICH OBTAIN THE BENEFIT OF THE FULL MONETARY COMPENSATORY AMOUNTS.

/ WHILE SPEAKING OF BEEF I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE

WHILE SPEAKING OF BELF I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN RAISING THE FUNDS FOR THE PRODUCER'S OWN CO-OPERATIVE THE "ULSTER FARMER'S INVESTMENT LIMITED" AND EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR THE GOVERNMENTS CONTRIBUTION TO THIS PROJECT. THIS EXERCISE WILL GREATLY STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF PRODUCERS IN THE MARKETING OF THEIR FAT CATTLE.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING BOARDS HAVE MADE AN ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR PRIMARY PRODUCERS AND A GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT GUARANTEEING THE FUTURE OF OUR MARKETING BOARDS AFTER THE END OF THE E. E. C. TRANSITION PERIOD AT 31 S.T. DECEMBER NEXT IS URGENTLY REQUIRED.

I AM ALSO GREATLY CONCERNED AT THE PROBLEMS FOR THE COUNTY DOWN FISHERMEN ARISING OUT OF THE E. E. C. CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE MANX AND MOURNE HERRING FISHERIES. WE CANNOT DISPUTE THE NEED FOR SOME MEASURE OF CONSERVATION TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE OF THESE HERRING STOCKS BUT IN THE CASE OF THE MOURNE FISHERY ANY GOVERNMENT SENSITIVE TO LOCAL NEEDS AND FEELINGS WOULD HAVE MADE SURE THAT THE OPERATORS OF THE SMALL BOATS OR SKIFFS COULD HAVE CONTINUED FISHING. THE AMOUNT THEY CATCH WOULD NOT HAVE HAD AN APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON THE TOTAL STOCK BUT IS SO VITAL TO THEM AND TO THE LOCAL PROCESSING INDUSTRY.

SO FAR AS THE MANX FISHERY IS CONCERNED I BELIEVE THAT THE TOTAL PERMITTED CATCH SHOULD HAVE BEEN SHARED BETWEEN ALL THOSE FISHERMEN FROM COUNTY DOWN WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY FISHED IN THOSE WATERS. I REALISE IT IS NOW TOO LATE TO ARRANGE THIS FOR THE CURRENT SEASON BUT I HOPE THAT IN FUTURE ALL RECOGNISED FISHERMEN WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE A SHARE OF THE TOTAL PERMITTED. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN MATTERS SUCH AS HERRING CONSERVATION, CONTROL OF DOGS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES PROBLEMS TOGETHER WITH THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING MANY OTHER SECTIONS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAS BEEN HANDLED, DEMONSTRATES THE INSENSITIVITY OF DIRECT RULE FROM WESTMINSTER AND THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AMONGST BRITISH POLITICIANS HANDLING OUR AFFAIRS. IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS AND MANY OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING OUR ULSTER COMMUNITY THAT I HAVE CAMPAIGNED AND WILL CONTINUE TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE RETURN OF A DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT.

/I WANT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF OUR M. P.'S

I WANT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF OUR M. P.'S AT WESTMINSTER IN CHANGING THE ATTITUDE OF PARLIAMENT TOWARDS FAIR AND JUST REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WHICH ALTHOUGH DUE TO US BY RIGHT CANNOT EVER BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR A LOCAL DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT. EVEN IN SCOTLAND WHERE THEY HAVE A FULL QUOTA OF WESTMINSTER M.P.'S AND WHERE THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND HIS MINISTERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SCOTSMEN AND THE QUEEN IS FULLY ACCEPTED IT WOULD APPEAR THAT A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE STILL WANT A DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT. NOTHING LESS WILL SATISFY US IN NORTHERN IRELAND BUT IT MUST BE A DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT THAT WILL WORK: NOT A COMPULSORY POWER-SHARING WITH A MINORITY THAT IS DEDICATED TO A UNITED IRELAND AND THAT REFUSES TO PAY ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN.

THE PRIME MINISTER MUST KNOW THAT POWER-SHARING WORKS ONLY IN COUNTRIES WHERE IT IS VOLUNTARY, NO ONE PARTY HAS AN OVERALL MAJORITY AND THE PARTIES JOINING IN COALITION HAVE AGREEMENT IN MAJOR POLICY ISSUES AND A COMMON ALLEGIANCE TO THE HEAD OF STATE. THIS ARRANGEMENT IS USUALLY BORN OF NECESSITY AND EVEN THEN OFTEN BREAKS DOWN. NOWHERE IN THE WORLD IS ONE MINORITY PARTY GUARANTEED A PLACE IN GOVERNMENT WITH A RESULTANT VETO IN ALL DECISIONS. THE POWER-SHARING EXPERIMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN 1974 WAS ROUNDLY CONDEMNED AND REJECTED BY THE ULSTER PEOPLE AND THERE IS EVERY EVIDENCE THAT A SIMILAR PROJECT WOULD MEET WITH THE SAME FATE FROM THE MAJORITY OF THE ULSTER PEOPLE. YET DESPITE THESE FACTS AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMS TO HAVE SATISFIED NOT ONLY MR. JACK LYNCH WHOM HE MET IN VIOLATION OF THE DOWNING STREET DECLARATION BUT ALSO THE POPE THAT HIS POWER-SHARING POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS BEING PURSUED.

IT WAS VERY NOTICABLE FROM MR. JACK LYNCH'S REMARKS TO HIS OWN PEOPLE AFTER THE CALLAGHAN MEETING THAT HIS MAIN CONCERN WAS TOTAL INTEGRATION. HIS FIRST BOAST WHEN HE RETURNED TO DUBLIN WAS THAT HE HAD AN ASSURANCE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO TOTAL INTEGRATION INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM. THIS RELAYS THE MESSAGE TO EVERY ULSTER LOYALIST THAT LYNCH'S FIRST CONCERN IS TO BRING US INTO A UNITED IRELAND. TOTAL INTEGRATION IN HIS OPINION WOULD HAVE MADE THIS MORE DIFFICULT.

SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT AS RECENTLY AS FEBRUARY 1976 THE S. D. L. P. PUT A FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN AN ULSTER MORNING NEWSPAPER FOR THE DECLARED PURPOSE OF RE-ASSURING ULSTER LOYALISTS, PLAYING DOWN ITS OWN POLICY OF BRINGING NORTHERN IRELAND INTO THE IRISH REPUBLIC.

/ THIS EXERCISE HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT ON MANY

THIS EXERCISE HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT ON MANY LESS ASTUTE MODERATE UNIONIST PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THE ASSURANCE GIVEN AS THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA IN ULSTER POLITICS, TRUST THE S. D. L. P. AND TAKE THEM INTO A COALITION CABINET. THE TONE OF ITS RECENTLY DECLARED POLICY DECLARATION IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT WE FOUND IN THAT ADVERTISEMENT OF ONLY A YEAR AND A HALF AGO AND JUSTIFIES THE SUSPICIONS WHICH MANY OF US ENTERTAINED. THE S. D. L. P.'S NEW CLARIFICATION OF POLICY CONFIRMS OUR REJECTION OF MEMBERS OF THIS PARTY AS COALITION PARTNERS AND MARKS THE END OF THE (FOR CERTAIN) PROPOSED SCHEME FOR CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT IN ULSTER.

THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR A FULL AND FAIR ASSESSMENT OF THE VERY LIBERAL PROPOSALS FOR MINORITY PARTICIPATION WHICH WE OURSELVES MADE IN OUR CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS. INDEED THE TIME HAS COME WHEN THERE MUST BE A RETURN TO NORMAL POLITICS, WHERE PARTIES CAN PUT THEIR VARIOUS POLICIES TO THE ELECTORATE AND THE ELECTORATE CAN CHOOSE WHAT SORT OF ULSTER GOVERNMENT THEY WANT. IT IS ONLY IN THIS WAY THAT ULSTER'S ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN A DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT AT STORMONT CAN DEAL WITH THE MANY MATTERS THAT AFFECT OUR EVERYDAY LIFE - INCLUDING INTERNAL SECURITY AND THE ECONOMY. IN THE SECURITY FIELD I MUST PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR FORCES FOR THE OBVIOUS SUCCESSSES THEY ARE HAVING IN BRINGING TERRORISTS TO JUSTICE. IT IS CLEAR THAT NO BOMBER OR MURDERER IS NOW SAFE EVEN IF HE COMMITTED HIS CRIMES YEARS AGO. I ALSO APPLAUD THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE SUPPORT HE HAS GIVEN THE SECURITY FORCES - ALTHOUGH MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE MATTERS OF SUPPLIES AND ARMAMENT - AND FOR MAKING IT CLEAR BEYOND DOUBT THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT WILL FINISH THE JOB (HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES) AND FOR THE FIRM ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE NO AMNESTY FOR CRIMINALS.

WHAT A CONTRAST THIS MAKES WITH THE TWO FACED ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHORITIES IN THE REPUBLIC. THERE ONE HUNDRED OR MORE KNOWN MURDERERS CAN STRUT AROUND IN SAFETY WHILE THE GOVERNMENT PAYS LIP SERVICE TO THE TO THE GOAL OF ELIMINATING TERRORISM.

THE I. R. A. MUST NOW SEE THAT IT IS FIGHTING A LOST CAUSE. IT MUST REALISE THAT NORTHERN IRELAND IS NOT CYPRUS OR ADEN OR SOME OTHER FORMER COLONY WHERE A MAJORITY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION WANTED RID OF FOREIGN OCCUPYING POWER. A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE HERE ARE DETERMINED THAT NORTHERN IRELAND WILL REMAIN PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM THEY SEE THE SECURITY FORCES AS THEIR SECURITY FORCES AND NOT THE FORCES OF AN OCCUPYING POWER. NEITHER THE I. R. A. NOR ANY OTHER REPUBLICAN BODY - VIOLENT OR NON VIOLENT - CAN HOPE TO CHANGE THIS.

/I BELIEVE THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

I BELIEVE THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF NORTHERN IRELAND . . . ROMAN CATHOLICS ALSO UNDERSTAND THIS. THEY ACCEPT THAT NORTHERN IRELAND WILL REMAIN PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THAT THE VIOLENCE OF THE I. R. A. WILL NEVER ACHIEVE ANYTHING EXCEPT SUFFERING FOR INNOCENT PEOPLE INCLUDING MANY OF THEIR OWN CO-RELIGIONISTS. THE VAST MAJORITY OF ULSTER PEOPLE NOW REALISE THAT THE ONLY HOPE OF RELIEF IS TO GET RID OF THE I. R. A. AND AS THIS SIMPLE FACT DAWNS ON MORE PEOPLE SO WILL THE NET TIGHTEN AND FINALLY CLOSE IN THE I. R. A. THE RECENT SPATE OF KNEE-CAPPINGS SHOWS THAT EVEN THE I. R. A. ARE NOW BEGINNING TO SEE THAT THEIR GAME IS UP.

THIS IS A NEW AND WELCOME PHASE INTO WHICH OUR PROVINCE IS ENTERING BUT I BELIEVE THE SAME HOLDS GOOD FOR OUR PARTY.

AFTER ENJOYING THE REGULAR SUPPORT OF MORE THAN SIXTY PER CENT OF THE ELECTORATE WHICH IN TURN WON OVER SIXTY PER CENT OF THE SEATS IN SUCCESSIVE STORMONT GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR A GREAT MANY YEARS OUR PARTY'S POPULARITY DROPPED TO THE EXTENT THAT WE WON ONLY TWENTY FOUR PER CENT OF THE SEATS IN THE CONVENTION ELECTION. THIS WAS MAINLY CAUSED BY THE EVENTS WITH THE PARTY DURING 1973-74 WE THUS SUFFERED A SIXTY FIVE PER CENT CUT BACK IN ELECTORAL SUPPORT FROM THE ULSTER PEOPLE-IN THE CONVENTION WE WERE COMPELLED TO WORK WITH OTHERS IN COALITION. WE GAVE A LEAD AND IN THIS AND MANY OTHER WAYS WE SHOWED THE ULSTER PUBLIC THAT WE WERE WORTHY OF THEIR CONFIDENCE. THE RECENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS HAVE SHOWN THAT WE HAVE MADE A GOOD RECOVERY, WINNING THIRTY FOUR PER CENT OF THE COUNCIL SEATS THUS REGISTERING A THIRTY NINE PER CENT IMPROVEMENT IN A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.

OF COURSE WE HAVE A LONG WAY STILL TO GO BEFORE WE CAN RE-ESTABLISH OURSELVES AS THE PARTY OF THE MAJORITY OF THE ULSTER PEOPLE BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE TREND OF POLITICAL SYMPATHY IN ULSTER IS STILL RUNNING OUR WAY. IF WE CONTINUE TO WORK AS A PARTY IN UNITY WITH FIRM PRINCIPLES, GOOD SENSE AND RIGHT DECISIONS WE SHALL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING SOLID FOR THE FUTURE SECURITY AND WELL BEING OF OUR ULSTER PEOPLE.

ONE TREND THAT IS FAVOURABLE TO US IN A PARTY POLITICAL SENSE IS THE CONTINUING DESIRE OF THOSE WHO PARTED COMPANY FROM US IN RECENT YEARS TO REJOIN US. ANY PERSONAL DIFFERENCE WITH SUCH PEOPLE MUST BE SET ASIDE AND FOR ULSTER'S SAKE WE SHOULD HOLD OUT THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP AND WELCOME THEM BACK INTO THE PARTY NOT IN ANY SPIRIT OF SUPERIORITY BUT AS FELLOW UNIONISTS DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF ULSTER'S CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION AND PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL CITIZENS.

/SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE S. D. L. P. POLICY STATEMENT

SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE S. D. L. P. POLICY STATEMENT VARIOUS SHIFTS OF POSITION OF SOME OF THE SMALLER GROUPS AND PARTIES HAVE TAKEN PLACE. THE ALLIANCE PARTY HAS ADOPTED A MOST IRRESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE THROUGH THEIR OPPOSITION TO CO-OPERATION OR COALITION WITH ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY FOR THE PURPOSE OF RESTORING OUR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND RETURNING A DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT WHICH THEY HAVE SO FREQUENTLY ADVOCATED.

WE ALL KNOW THAT NO SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY IN ULSTER NOT EVEN THE ALLIANCE HAS ANY PROSPECT OF WINNING AN OVERALL MAJORITY - HENCE THERE MUST BE SOME TYPE OF CO-OPERATION AMONGST SOME OF THE LARGER PARTIES BUT IF THEY ALL ADOPTED THE ATTITUDE OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY THEN WE WOULD HAVE DIRECT RULE FOR A VERY LONG TIME AHEAD.

THE ALLIANCE PARTY LEADER SPOKE RATHER FOOLISHLY RECENTLY ABOUT THE TWO SIDES OF THE "SECTARIAN DEVIDE" I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO EVERYBODY THAT I DO NOT REGARD MYSELF NOR THIS PARTY AS BEING ON ANY SIDE OF A SUPPOSED SECTARIAN DIVIDE. MEMBERSHIP OF OUR PARTY IS OPEN TO PEOPLE OF ANY RELIGIOUS PERSUASION OR NONE. PROBABLY WE HAVE A GREATER VARIETY OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS AMONG OUR MEMBERS THAN ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY IN ULSTER.

THE TWO SIDES AS WE SEE THEM, ARE MADE UP OF THOSE WHO ARE PRO-BRITISH AND THOSE WHO ARE ANTE-BRITISH. YET SO PERVERSELY HAS THE RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS BEEN SPREAD AROUND THAT RECENTLY WHEN A NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF SCHOOL AGE IN BRITAIN WERE QUESTIONED ABOUT WORLD AFFAIRS ABOUT FORTY PER CENT OF THEM SHOWED THAT THEY BELIEVED THAT THE I. R. A. IS A MILITANT PROTESTANT ORGANISATION.

OUR POSITION IS PERFECTLY CLEAR. WE ARE BRITISH, WE HAVE CHOSEN A BRITISH WAY OF LIFE. WE CHERISH BRITISH LOYALTIES, WE WANT TO LIVE UNDER A BRITISH FORM OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY. THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY CERTAIN MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO COMPROMISE WITH THOSE WHO REJECT OUR BRITISH HERITAGE. I CAN SEE NOTHING SECTARIAN IN SUCH A VIEW. THIS IS PURELY POLITICAL AND NOT RELIGIOUS.

WHAT THEN ARE THE PROSPECTS AHEAD FOR US? I HAVE FOUND RECENTLY THAT WITH THE IMPROVED SECURITY SITUATION AND REDUCTION IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TURNING THEIR MINDS TO THE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS IN THE PROVINCE. IT MUST BE MADE CLEAR TO SUCH PEOPLE THAT WHAT WE WANT IS A RESTORATION OF NORMAL PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT SUCH AS WE HAD IN THE PAST BUT WITH MODIFICATIONS TO SUIT OUR PRESENT TIMES AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

/THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO THIS RESTORATION OF OUR

THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO THIS RESTORATION OF OUR DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE HAS BEEN A TENDENCY OF BRITISH GOVERNMENTS AND PARTIES TO WANT TO IMPOSE ON US A GERRYMANDERED OR RIGGED VERSION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO MOST OF OUR PEOPLE, AND WOULD BE SLANTED AND TAILORED TO THE ADVANTAGE OF INTERESTS HOSTILE TO OUR MOST CHERISHED NATIONAL VALUES AND WHICH WOULD NOT WORK IN PRACTICE.

WHAT WE MUST ASK OURSELVES AND CONSIDER VERY SERIOUSLY IS WHETHER THE EXTENDING OF IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAY NOT BE A ROUND ABOUT WAY OF REFUSING ALTCGHTER TO LET US HAVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AT ALL OR WHETHER IN FACT ANY SCHEME WHICH THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO ACCEPT AT THIS STAGE MAY NOT BE A TRAP OR A METHOD OF LURING US INTO A SITUATION WHEN WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE FORCED TO ACCEPT STRUCTURES TO WHICH WE ARE VEHEMENTLY OPPOSING AT THE PRESENT TIME.

IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CANNOT BRING ITSELF TO FACE REALISTICALLY THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT IN TERMS OF FREE PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND IF THERE IS SOME JUSTIFIED OBJECTIONS TO DIRECT RULE, WHICH I THINK THERE IS THEN ANY OUTSIDE PRESSURE TENDS TO OPERATE IN THE DIRECTION OF TOTAL INTEGRATION.

TOTAL INTEGRATION INTO THE NORMAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE REST OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ALTHOUGH MUCH MORE PREFERABLE TO THE ULSTER PEOPLE THAN ABSORPTION INTO A UNITED IRELAND IT IS NOT WHAT WE WANT NOR DOES IT PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A STABLE AND LASTING SETTLEMENT. IT IS FUTILE FOR THE POLITICIANS OF WESTMINSTER AND THE MANDARINS OF WHITEHALL TO IGNORE THE ULSTER PEOPLE WHILE THEY THEMSELVES THEORISE ABOUT THESE THINGS OR DISCUSS THEM LENGTHILY WITH OUTSIDERS WHO HAVE DESIGNS ON OUR PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THIS IS A TIME FOR US TO LOOK FORWARD TO BETTER THINGS. WITH A BACKGROUND OF DIMINISHING BUT FAR FROM EXTINGUISHED VIOLENCE, WITH MANY OF THE ILLUSIONS THAT HAVE DOMINATED ULSTER POLITICS IN RECENT YEARS NEARLY PLAYED OUT, WITH A CHANGED PARTY-POLITICAL SITUATION AND WITH OUR OWN PARTY RESTORED TO A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF PUBLIC TRUST AND ELECTORAL SUPPORT, WE CAN NOW MOVE MUCH MORE CONFIDENTLY INTO THE FUTURE. THROUGH THE PROPERLY CONSTITUTED POLICY MAKING ORGANS OF OUR PARTY WE HAVE A CLEAR IDEA IN OUR MINDS AS TO WHAT WE WANT FOR THE FUTURE OF ULSTER AND THE TIME IS AT HAND WHEN WE MUST STAND SOLIDLY SHOULDER TO SHOULDER AND SEE THAT WE GET IT.