NOTE FOR THE RECORD

HAIRMAN'S MEETING WITH UUUC REPRESENTATIVES - 5 PM THURSDAY, 21 AUGUST 1975

1. PRESENT:

Chairman Private Secretary Mr Craig Mr Beattie Capt Ardill

- 2. The meeting had been convened at the request of the Chairman.
- 3. The Chairman explained that he had at his own request met the SDLP negotiators earlier in the day and wanted to make it clear that such discussions as he was now having would be regarded as quite confidential. To enable him to make a contribution to the inter-party talks which were now in progress he wished to pose a variety of questions to those concerned questions which should not be interpreted as having any particular bias in his viewpoint but ones to which he would find it helpful to have reactions at this stage.
- 4. It was clear to him that there was no give with either UUUC or SDLP on the vital issue of power-sharing and he appreciated the views being put to him on this matter. UUUC belief that several elections had shown clearly how the majority felt and SDLP that they could not sell anything less than what they had attained at Sunningdale. What however was the position on less controversial points were UUUC not going to present a case in toto?
- 5. The UUUC representatives said that basically what they would discuss in full Plenary Session would represent what they had already put to the SDLP privately. They really could offer very little more. They thought that there would be a general feeling that they had been very reasonable in what they had in fact already offered.
- 6. The Chairman then asked what the objections of the Loyalists were to full power-sharing. They indicated:-
 - (i) good government needed opposition power-sharing provided for none;
 - (ii) all participants of a government should be supporters of the institutions of the State;
 - (iii) in a democracy majority should be left to form Government.

They mentioned also as a fourth point but one which they did not feel they needed to press 'loyalty to the State'.

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- 7. Next the Chairman asked how far they were prepared to discuss the possibility of the formation of a voluntary coalition? The representatives indicated that they could not be sure how much real support they could obtain for this but that they had been prepared to discuss the possible formation of a coalition in order to get a new Northern Ireland Government off the ground. SDLP had shown no disposition to consider this.
- 8. The representatives strongly felt that they themselves had made honest efforts to move towards agreement but they felt that SDLP were not willing to move to meet them. They themselves would be spelling out very clearly to the public the good case which they had to offer.
- This would first take place in resumed Plenary Sessions of the Convention which their members were becoming increasingly keen to have.
- 10. Reverting to the crucial question of power-sharing the UUUC representatives confirmed that on the following Tuesday they would be giving to the SDLP a Paper detailing all their objections to this structure of government. They undertook to provide the Chairman with a copy of the Paper.
- 11. The meeting terminated at approximately 6 pm.

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26 August 1975