

SPEECH BY

THE LEADER

MR DAVID TRIMBLE LLB BL MP

TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

AT THE MAGHERABUOY HOUSE HOTEL,  
PORTRUSH

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I think it is only right that I should begin this speech by expressing for myself, for all members of our party and for by far the greater number of the people of Ulster, our great appreciation for the leadership over the last sixteen years of Jim Molyneux.

His role in stabilising Ulster politics and bringing the whole community into sight of the oft promised peace has not yet received the recognition it deserves. But Jim knows that he occupies an important place in our affections and will retain an honoured role in our counsels.

### Party Structures

When I stood before the Ulster Unionist Council in the Ulster Hall just six weeks ago I put at the beginning of my speech the reform of our party structures. I want to make that subject my first priority this afternoon.

We have been looking at this subject for some time. Consultation papers have been circulated, responses considered. Our working party have modified the proposals in the light of the responses, in particular dropping the suggestion for a candidates list. Consultation is good but it should not be endless.

I think the time is right to act. At the Annual General Meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council in March 1995 we resolved in principle to make changes. We should now aim to bring these changes before the next Annual General Meeting in the spring of 1996.

I want to highlight two principle features of the changes.

First the common basis for membership. We are not that large a party that we cannot put in place systems that enable us to know who all our members are. If we did know who all our members are we would then be able to contact them. Information could go to all members. All members could participate in key decisions such as leadership elections and, within a constituency or District Electoral area, selection of candidates. Bogus membership and entryism, which may exist in some areas could be rooted out more easily.

Secondly, the new delegate structure.

Under the proposed changes the governing bodies of our party would be composed solely of delegates sent by branches and associations wholly within the Party. This not a matter of expelling the Orange delegates or cutting the link with the Orange Institution.



It is our earnest hope that the present Orange delegates, who under our present rules must all be members of our Party will come through the branches. Constituency representation on the Council will be expanded to allow for this. Indeed we would like to see many more Orangemen participating directly in politics and expressing their own views rather than leaving the job to the comparative small number of Orange delegates.

If these changes are approved I would propose that we find another way of reflecting the historic association between the Institution and our Party, perhaps through an arrangement to consult together on ways of furthering our common aims. The commonality of those aims and the underlying social reality will ensure a continued association.

If we make these changes it will roughly coincide with the creation of the eighteen new constituencies. There is something to be said using their formation as the time for a new start.

#### Talks

Six weeks ago I said that I would seek meetings with all the major constitutional parties in Ulster, the rest of the UK, the Republic and elsewhere, in order to make sure that I understand their position and that they are informed as to my views.

I have held such meetings with every significant constitutional party in the British Isles except the Scottish and Welsh nationalists, the Liberal Democrats and the Irish Labour party and meetings have been arranged with the latter two. The meetings generally were cordial and covered many issues. We have agreed to pursue our discussions with the SDLP and the DUP on our own agendas so that the social and economic needs of the Ulster people are not neglected. But inevitably the meetings focused on what is called the peace process and I want to consider this in some detail.

#### Decommissioning

The key issue is that the peace process is stalled because of the refusal of Sinn Fein/IRA to meet the clear requirements of paragraph 10 of the Downing Street Declaration.

I make no apologies for referring to the Declaration. It is a very uneven document. We have never endorsed all its contents and have been very critical of parts of it. Nevertheless there are some few things of value in it and Paragraph 10 is one. I quote it because it was agreed by both the British and Irish Governments and endorsed by the US Government. And I think it is